

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

HAROLD D KING  
1957 – 185<sup>TH</sup> ST  
MT PLEASANT IA 52641

CARE INITIATIVES  
C/O JOHNSON & ASSOCIATES  
PO BOX 6007  
OMAHA NE 68106-0007

Appeal Number: 05A-UI-03112-BT  
OC: 02/20/05 R: 04  
Claimant: Appellant (2)

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.**

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Harold King (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated March 16, 2005, reference 01, which held that he was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from Care Initiatives (employer) for work-connected misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 12, 2005. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Jens Lee, Administrator and Employer Representative Dawn Fox.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed as a full-time business office manager from October 19, 1999 through February 17, 2005. The employer met with the claimant on February 2, 2005 due to problems the claimant was having with his co-employees. The employer had received complaints about the claimant. In particular, the claimant was somewhat confrontational with the dietary manager because he suspected the manager's daughter may have taken some of his food. The employer told the claimant in this meeting that things had to change and he wanted the claimant to consider resigning, but did not have any reason to fire him. The claimant was on vacation from February 3 through February 15, 2005. He returned on February 16, 2005 and when the employer met with him to talk about the problems, the claimant stated, "Oh, are we going to be going into this again." The claimant then advised the employer if he were discharged, the census would go down. The employer took it as a threat and seeing that the claimant was not about to change, he was discharged at that time.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a.

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or

incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

The claimant was discharged for his inability to get along with his co-workers and his veiled threat to the employer about the census going down if he were fired. However, no formal written warnings were issued. Although the employer may have had legitimate business reasons to discharge the claimant, his conduct does not rise to the level of disqualifying misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Benefits are denied.

#### DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated March 16, 2005, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

sdb/pjs