

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

SHARLA M MATHER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-09772-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

PELLA CORPORATION
Employer

**OC: 09/16/07 R: 01
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

871 IAC 26.8(5) - Decision on the Record

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Sharla Mather appealed from an unemployment insurance decision dated October 12, 2007, reference 01, that denied benefits. A telephone hearing was scheduled for November 7, 2007. The appellant provided a telephone number for the hearing, but was not available at that number at the scheduled time of the hearing. The employer was available for the hearing through Bob Larson. Based on the appellant's failure to participate in the hearing, the administrative file, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

ISSUE:

Decision on the record.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The appellant, Sharla Mather, responded to the hearing notice instructions and provided a telephone number at which she could be reached for the hearing: 712-374-3009. This was the same telephone number Ms. Mather had provided on her appeal letter and the same number she had used for the October 11, 2007 fact-finding interview. However, at the scheduled time of the appeal hearing, the appellant was not available at the telephone number she provided. The administrative law judge made three attempts to reach Ms. Mather. On the first attempt, an adult female answered, but terminated the call as soon as the administrative law judge identified himself. On the second attempt, the phone rang several times and then routed the administrative law judge to an answering machine, where the administrative law judge left an appropriate message. On the third attempt, the phone rang immediately and routed the administrative law judge to an answering machine, where the administrative law judge left an appropriate message.

The appellant did not request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. The administrative law judge has conducted a careful review of the administrative file to determine whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

871 IAC 26.8(3), (4) and (5) provide:

Withdrawals and postponements.

(3) If, due to emergency or other good cause, a party, having received due notice, is unable to attend a hearing or request postponement within the prescribed time, the presiding officer may, if no decision has been issued, reopen the record and, with notice to all parties, schedule another hearing. If a decision has been issued, the decision may be vacated upon the presiding officer's own motion or at the request of a party within 15 days after the mailing date of the decision and in the absence of an appeal to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections and appeals. If a decision is vacated, notice shall be given to all parties of a new hearing to be held and decided by another presiding officer. Once a decision has become final as provided by statute, the presiding officer has no jurisdiction to reopen the record or vacate the decision.

(4) A request to reopen a record or vacate a decision may be heard ex parte by the presiding officer. The granting or denial of such a request may be used as a grounds for appeal to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections and appeals upon the issuance of the presiding officer's final decision in the case.

(5) If good cause for postponement or reopening has not been shown, the presiding officer shall make a decision based upon whatever evidence is properly in the record.

The results of the administrative law judge's attempts to contact the claimant suggest that the claimant intentionally and willfully decided to make herself unavailable for the appeal hearing she had requested.

The administrative law judge has carefully reviewed evidence in the record and concludes that the unemployment insurance decision previously entered in this case is correct and should be affirmed.

Pursuant to the rule, the appellant must make a written request to the administrative law judge that the hearing be reopened within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The written request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the beginning of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at its scheduled time.

The claimant had asserted in her appeal letter, "I feel I should be able to receive benefits since I pay into unemployment...." The administrative law judge wants to clarify for the claimant that the unemployment insurance system is funded through employer contributions and tax dollars. Employees or claimants do not "pay into" the unemployment insurance system.

DECISION:

The Agency representative's October 12, 2007, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The decision disqualifying the claimant from receiving benefits remains in effect. This decision will become final unless a written request establishing good cause to reopen the record is made to the administrative law judge within 15 days of the date of this decision.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs