

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**JEFFERY L PRESTON**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 10A-UI-17473-DT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**STREAM INTERNATIONAL INC**  
Employer

**OC: 10/17/10**

**Claimant: Respondent (2/R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge  
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Stream International, Inc. (employer) appealed a representative's December 14, 2010 decision (reference 02) that concluded Jeffery L. Preston (claimant) was qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits after a separation from employment. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on February 3, 2011. The claimant failed to respond to the hearing notice and provide a telephone number at which he could be reached for the hearing and did not participate in the hearing. Stacey Alberts appeared on the employer's behalf and presented testimony from one other witness, Brian Carl. During the hearing, Employer's Exhibit One was entered into evidence. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the employer, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for work-connected misconduct?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The claimant started working for the employer on September 17, 2011. He worked full time as a customer support professional at the employer's Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, in-bound call center. His last day of work was October 20, 2010. The employer discharged him on that date. The stated reason for the discharge was intentional call avoidance after prior warning.

The claimant had received a written warning for call avoidance on March 17, 2010, and a final written warning for call avoidance on June 15, 2010. On October 19 the claimant's team manager, Mr. Carl, ran a report on the 23 members of his team covering October 12 through October 16. The claimant worked three days (eight hours each) during that period, October 12, October 15, and October 16. The report indicated that on those three days the claimant was at work but logged off his phone for three hours, five hours, and six hours, respectively. During those periods the claimant would not be receiving incoming calls. Typically during an eight-hour day a team member would receive about 35 calls; during these three days the claimant only received 17 calls, 14 calls, and 7 calls, respectively.

Due to the repeated call avoidance after prior warnings, the employer determined to discharge the claimant.

The claimant established a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective October 17, 2010. The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits after the separation.

#### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

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 § 96.5-2-a. Before a claimant can be denied unemployment insurance benefits, the employer has the burden to establish the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct. Cosper v. IDJS, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982); Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

In order to establish misconduct such as to disqualify a former employee from benefits an employer must establish the employee was responsible for a deliberate act or omission which was a material breach of the duties and obligations owed by the employee to the employer. 871 IAC 24.32(1)a; Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445 (Iowa 1979); Henry v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 391 N.W.2d 731, 735 (Iowa App. 1986). The conduct must show a 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. 871 IAC 24.32(1)a; Huntoon, supra; Henry, supra. In contrast, 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. 871 IAC 24.32(1)a; Huntoon, supra; Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984).

The claimant's repeated call avoidance after prior warning shows a willful or wanton disregard of the standard of behavior the employer has the right to expect from an employee, as well as an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests and of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. The employer discharged the claimant for reasons amounting to work-connected misconduct.

The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code § 96.3-7. In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was ineligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the claimant is eligible for a waiver of overpayment under Iowa Code § 96.3-7-b is remanded the Claims Section.

**DECISION:**

The representative's December 14, 2010 decision (reference 02) is reversed. The employer discharged the claimant for disqualifying reasons. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits as of October 17, 2010. This disqualification continues until the claimant has been paid ten times his weekly benefit amount for insured work, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account will not be charged. The matter is remanded to the Claims Section for investigation and determination of the overpayment issue.

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Lynette A. F. Donner  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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