

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JOHNITA CLEMONS
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 08A-UI-03434-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

LEIGHMAN CORP
Employer

**OC: 03/02/08 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Johnita Clemons (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated March 25, 2008, reference 01, which held that she was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from Leighman Corp (employer) for work-related misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 24, 2008. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Rich Straw, General Manager. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct.

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 sandwich artist from approximately June 2006 through mid-December 2007. She was discharged for excessive unexcused absenteeism after being warned. The employer was unable to provide the hire date, the warning dates and the separation date.

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.

When misconduct is alleged as the reason for the discharge and subsequent disqualification of benefits, it is incumbent upon the employer to present evidence in support of its allegations. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. 871 IAC 24.32(4). The employer witness participated and testified the claimant was fired for being late after a final warning. No further information was provided and the witness could not provide any dates. The employer failed to meet its burden. Work-connected misconduct has not been established in this case and benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated March 25, 2008, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/pjs