

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**JORGE J LANDA**  
Claimant

**SC DATA CENTER INC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 21A-UI-01902-LJ-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 03/08/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On December 17, 2020, the claimant, Jorge J. Landa, filed an appeal from the July 6, 2020 (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon a determination that claimant was still employed. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephonic hearing was held on Thursday, February 25, 2021. This appeal was heard along with 21A-UI-01903-LJ-T. The claimant, Jorge J. Landa, participated. The employer, SC Data Center, Inc., did not register a participant for the hearing and did not participate. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

**ISSUE:**

Did claimant Jorge J. Landa timely file an appeal?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on July 6, 2020. Claimant testified that he likely received the decision and recalls reading it. The first sentence of the decision states, "If this decision denies benefits and is not reversed on appeal, it may result in an overpayment which you will be required to repay." The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by July 16, 2020. Claimant remembers reading that there was a deadline to appeal of July 16. He testified that he believed he met that deadline. The appeal was not filed until December 17, 2020, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant admits it is possible he did not appeal in a timely manner because he did not understand the decision he received.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant Jorge Landa's appeal was not timely filed.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

*2. Initial determination.* A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

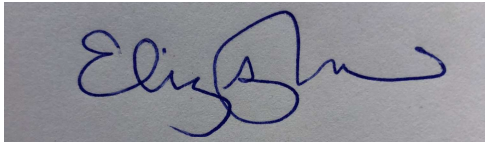
The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or

misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The July 6, 2020 (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant Jorge Landa failed to file a timely appeal, and the administrative law judge has no jurisdiction to make a decision on the merits. The decision of the representative remains in effect.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature appears to be "Elizabeth A. Johnson" written in a cursive style.

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Elizabeth A. Johnson  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau  
1000 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209  
Fax (515)478-3528

March 5, 2021  
Decision Dated and Mailed

lj/kmj