

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

NICHOLAS A MILLER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 12A-UI-11864-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CELLCO PARTNERSHIP
Employer

OC: 08/19/12
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Nicholas Miller (claimant) appealed a representative's September 21, 2012 decision (reference 01) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work with Cellco Partnership (employer) for violation of a known company rule. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for October 29, 2012. The claimant participated personally. The employer did not provide a telephone number where it could be reached and therefore, did not participate in the hearing.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on January 4, 2007, as a full-time retail sales representative. The employer did not have a handbook. During 2012, the claimant received one warning for a cash drawer inconsistency of under \$1.00.

On March 27, 2012, the claimant was helping a customer with a problem. He called tech support three times and submitted a trouble ticket, but the problem was not solved. The company sent two e-mails about what to do in similar situations. The claimant did not violate any of the instructions of those e-mails. It was common practice for employees to use another phone to try to fix the problem phone. The claimant talked to his manager about using another phone to fix the problem. The manager did not tell the claimant to stop what he intended to do. Afterwards, the claimant told the manager that he used another phone to fix the problem. The manager did not tell the claimant that the use was inappropriate.

The claimant suffered a work-related medical issue and had stopped working on or about April 1, 2012. He had surgery and was released to return to work with restrictions on August 20, 2012. The employer terminated the claimant on August 21, 2012, for his actions on March 27,

2012. The claimant lost his health insurance. He is supposed to have another surgery for his work related issue on January 16, 2013.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for misconduct.

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.

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). The employer did not participate in the hearing and, therefore, provided no evidence of job-related misconduct. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's September 21, 2012 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The employer has not met its burden of proof to establish job-related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw