IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS

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

VINCENT BROWN
Claimant

PRAIRIE MEADOWS RACETRACK & CASINO
Employer

APPEAL NO. 11O-UI-16284-WT

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE DECISION

OC: 8/14/11
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a fact-finding decision dated September 2, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. A hearing was held on September 30, 2011. During the course of the hearing, the claimant was disconnected. The hearing proceeded and a decision in favor of the employer was entered on October 3, 2011. Claimant appealed and the matter was ultimately remanded to the Appeals Section on December 21, 2011. After due notice, a new telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on January 26, 2011. Claimant participated through attorney, Bruce Stoltze. Employer failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Exhibits A through E were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds the following facts. Claimant last worked for employer on September 9, 2011. Claimant was discharged on September 12, 2011 by employer for violating a final warning. Claimant's memory was hazy about the matters which led to his termination.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

871 IAC 24.32(4) provides:

(4) Report required. The claimant's statement and the employer's statement must give detailed facts as to the specific reason for the claimant's discharge. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. In cases where a suspension or disciplinary layoff exists, the claimant is considered as discharged, and the issue of misconduct shall be resolved.

The gravity of the incident, number of policy violations and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct. The final incident is more accurately described as a good faith mistake. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was not discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is not disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The fact-finding decision dated September 2, 2011, reference 01, is affirmed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

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Joseph L. Walsh
Administrative Law Judge

_____
Decision Dated and Mailed

jlw/css