

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

BRADLEY R RUGGLES
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-03249-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 09/29/13
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) - Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
871 IAC 24.10 – Employer Participation in the Fact-finding Interview

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant appealed the March 10, 2014, (reference 04) representative's decision that concluded claimant is obligated to repay unemployment insurance benefits in the gross amount of \$2,448.00 for the six-week period ending November 9, 2013 as a result of an administrative law judge's disqualification decision dated December 12, 2013. A telephone hearing was held on April 16, 2014, pursuant to due notice. The claimant participated.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether claimant received and is obligated to repay the gross amount of unemployment insurance benefits received for the period in question.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The overpayment issue in this case was created by a separation disqualification decision of an administrative law judge in appeal number 13A-UI-12972-ST. The Employment Appeal Board in appeal number 14B-UI-12972 affirmed the denial of benefits in a decision dated February 6, 2014. Claimant did receive gross benefits in the amount of \$2,448.00 for the six-week period ending November 9, 2013.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes claimant has been overpaid benefits for the period in question.

Iowa Code § 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.
 - a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault,

the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

871 IAC 24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code § 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code § 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The administrative law judge concludes that the employer did participate in the fact-finding interview. Although claimant did not engage in any fraud or willful misrepresentation to obtain the benefits, he received benefits to which he was not entitled according to the administrative law judge's separation decision and the Employment Appeal Board decision referenced above. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The March 10, 2014 (reference 04) representative's decision is affirmed. The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$2,448.00 to which he was not entitled and those benefits must be recovered in accordance with Iowa law.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/css