

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**NICOLE CARSNER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 17A-UI-02420-JE-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**LIMOLINK INC**  
Employer

**OC: 02/12/17**  
**Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the February 28, 2017, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on March 28, 2017. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

**ISSUE:**

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

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time ground crew member for Limolink from March 16, 2007 to February 9, 2017. She was discharged for failing to discipline a chauffeur for being late.

As a ground crew member, the claimant was responsible for managing chauffeurs and has discretion on hiring, reprimanding, and suspending chauffeurs, among other duties. A previous passenger was late arriving which in turn caused the chauffeur in question to arrive at the airport 20 to 25 minutes before the next customer's flight landed rather than the required 30 minutes. The claimant declined to discipline the driver because she did not feel he was to blame for not being at the airport 30 minutes before the flight was scheduled to land.

The claimant's manager also cited another incident in deciding to discharge her. That situation involved one owner/operator making rude comments about another driver and the claimant did not stop him, talk to him about his statements or report his behavior. The claimant stated part of her job involved let chauffeurs voice their frustrations.

On February 9, 2017, the employer notified the claimant her employment was terminated.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

Iowa Code § 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. *Huntoon v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proving disqualifying misconduct. *Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. *Lee v. Employment Appeal Board*, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

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 without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. 871 IAC 24.32(4). The employer did not participate in the hearing and failed to provide any evidence. The evidence provided by the claimant does not rise to the level of

disqualifying job misconduct as that term is defined by Iowa law. The employer has not met its burden of proof. Therefore, benefits must be allowed.

**DECISION:**

The February 28, 2017, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

---

Julie Elder  
Administrative Law Judge

---

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/rvs