

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

CHRISTOPHER A TIDWELL
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-12095-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

LETICA CORPORATION
Employer

OC: 03/14/10
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(2)(a) – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the May 13, 2010, reference 02, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on November 8, 2010. Claimant participated. Allison Miller represented the employer and presented additional testimony through Henry Murphy. Exhibits One and Two were receive into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with the employment that disqualifies the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Christopher Tidwell was employed by Letica Corporation as a full-time district business manager from 2007 until November 30, 2009, when the employer discharged him for failing to meet sales goals. Mr. Tidwell was assigned a multistate region. Mr. Tidwell was to service existing accounts and to expand the employer's customer base by closing deals on new accounts. The employer set production goals for Mr. Tidwell and warned Mr. Tidwell that he would face discharge if he failed to meet the production goals. Mr. Tidwell used his best effort to meet the production goals, but fell short. Mr. Tidwell found it difficult to market the employer's product due to the price of the product and service concerns.

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.

The employer has the burden of proof in this matter. See Iowa Code section 96.6(2). Misconduct must be substantial in order to justify a denial of unemployment benefits. Misconduct serious enough to warrant the discharge of an employee is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits. See Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661 (Iowa 2000). The focus is on deliberate, intentional, or culpable acts by the employee. See Gimbel v. Employment Appeal Board, 489 N.W.2d 36, 39 (Iowa Ct. App. 1992).

While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of the current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act(s). The termination of employment must be based on a current act. See 871 IAC 24.32(8). In determining whether the conduct that prompted the discharge constituted a "current act," the administrative law judge considers the date on which the conduct came to the attention of the employer and the date on which the employer notified the claimant that the conduct subjected the claimant to possible discharge. See also Greene v. EAB, 426 N.W.2d 659, 662 (Iowa App. 1988).

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. See 871 IAC 24.32(4). When it is in a party's power to produce more direct and satisfactory evidence than is actually produced, it may fairly be inferred that the more direct evidence will expose deficiencies in that party's case. See Crosser v. Iowa Dept. of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976).

The evidence in the record establishes that the employer discharged Mr. Tidwell for failing to perform to the employer's satisfaction, but that Mr. Tidwell did perform his duties to the best of his abilities under unfavorable market conditions. Based on the evidence in the record and application of the appropriate law, the administrative law judge concludes that Mr. Tidwell was discharged for no disqualifying reason. Accordingly, Mr. Tidwell is eligible for benefits, provided

he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged for benefits paid to Mr. Tidwell.

DECISION:

The Agency representative's May 13, 2010, reference 02, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged for no disqualifying reason. The claimant is eligible for benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs