

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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Appeal Number: 05A-UI-05674-H2T
OC: 04-24-05 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the May 12, 2005, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on June 16, 2005. The claimant did not participate. The employer did participate through Lynn Champion, Supervisor.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a customer service representative full time beginning August 9, 2004 through April 1, 2005 when she was discharged. On March 30, 2005, the claimant was off the

phone from 9:39 a.m. to 9:57 a.m. without approval or permission for a total of 18 minutes. The claimant did not have permission to be off the phone on March 30, 2005 from Vicki, her team lead, or from anyone else.

On March 22, 2005, the claimant was off the phone three separate times without permission for a total of 58 minutes. On March 23, 2005, the claimant was off the phone on two separate occasions without permission for a total of 35 minutes. On March 25, 2005, the claimant was off the phone on three separate occasions without permission for a total of 55 minutes. On March 29, 2005, the claimant was off the phone without permission on one occasion for 19 minutes.

On March 19, the claimant was granted extra time off the phone because of personal problems. She experienced additional personal problems on March 21 that left her unable to perform her job. Those two days where she was off the phone were not counted against her.

On January 7, 2005 was put on an informal warning for six instances of coming back from break or lunch late that left her with reduced time on the phone. The claimant was last warned on February 11, 2005 that her job was in jeopardy for lack of punctuality occurrences. The claimant was told that she faced termination from employment upon another incident of unapproved off the phone time.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits after the separation from employment.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related 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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

An employer has a right to expect employees to conduct themselves in a certain manner. The claimant disregarded the employer's rights by failing to be on the phone working when she was required to do so. The claimant did not have permission to be off the phone as detailed above. When the claimant is off the phone the employer's customers cannot be helped and the employer could suffer a loss of business. The claimant had been warned previously about being off the phone for extended periods of time. The claimant's disregard of the employer's rights and interests is misconduct. As such, the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The May 12, 2005, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,285.00.

tkh/pjs