

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

RANDY D SIMMERS

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 12A-UI-11341-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WAL-MART STORES INC

Employer

OC: 05/20/12

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5(2)a – Discharge

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Randy Simmers, filed an appeal from a decision dated June 12, 2012, reference 01. The decision disqualified him from receiving unemployment benefits. After due notice was issued a hearing was held by telephone conference call on October 17, 2012. The claimant participated on his own behalf and was represented by Iowa Legal Aid in the person of Job Mukkada. The employer, Wal-Mart, did not provide a telephone number where a witness could be contacted and did not participate. Exhibit D-1 was admitted into the record.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal is timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on June 12, 2012. The claimant received the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by June 22, 2012. The appeal was not filed until September 18, 2012, which is after the date noticed on the decision.

The claimant had not provided the correct address to Iowa Workforce Development when he filed his claim for benefits and did not receive the original decision. However, he allowed 14 weeks to elapse, during which time he did not receive any benefits and did receive at least three monthly statements from his bank, before he contacted his local Workforce Center to file an appeal.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code Section 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week

with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. . . . Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev., 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); Johnson v. Board of Adjustment, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also In re Appeal of Elliott 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); Smith v. IESC, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

(1) The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge accepts the claimant did not receive the original decision because he gave an incorrect address to Iowa Workforce Development when he filed his claim. But for Mr. Simmers to allow 14 weeks to pass before checking on the status of his case is an unreasonable amount of time. His repeated mention of using his monthly bank statements to check on any payments may be correct but he had to have received statements for June, July and August 2012, which would have shown no payments from Iowa Workforce Development. This was also plenty of time for him to contact his local office.

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant waited an unreasonably long time to check into this matter even if he did not receive the initial determination. With 14 weeks elapsed time, the appeal is not timely.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated June 12, 2012, reference 01, is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect. The claimant is disqualified for unemployment benefits.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/pjs