

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

NATASHA K COVINGTON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-15808-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

SYSTEMS UNLIMITED INC
Employer

OC: 09/05/10
Claimant: Respondent (1-R)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Systems Unlimited (employer) appealed a representative's October 1, 2010 decision (reference 01) that concluded Natasha Covington (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for December 28, 2010. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Mona Dowiat, Assistant Director of Support Services. Exhibit D-1 was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal was filed in a timely manner and, if so, whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on August 9, 2008, as a full-time counselor. The employer terminated the claimant on September 10, 2010. Later, the employer discovered that the reason for termination did not exist and reinstated the claimant on October 1, 2010. The employer paid the claimant wages for the period of time she did not work.

A disqualification decision was mailed to the employer's address of record on October 1, 2010. The employer did receive the decision shortly after October 1, 2010. It faxed an appeal at 9:45 a.m. on October 7, 2010, and received confirmation that the fax was delivered properly to the correct fax number.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The first issue to be considered in this appeal is whether the employer's appeal is timely. The administrative law judge determines it is.

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. 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. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". 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. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The employer faxed an appeal within the time period allowed by law. Therefore, the appeal shall be accepted as timely.

The next issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. The administrative law judge concludes she was not.

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 establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The employer did not provide sufficient evidence of job-related misconduct. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

The issue of the overpayment of insurance benefits is remanded for determination.

DECISION:

The representative's October 1, 2010 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The employer's appeal is timely. The employer has not met its proof to establish job-related misconduct. Benefits are allowed. The issue of the overpayment of insurance benefits is remanded for determination.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw