

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**GARLANDRONN R BENTON**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-16554-S2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**TYSON FRESH MEATS INC**  
Employer

**OC: 09/06/09**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Tyson Fresh Meats (employer) appealed a representative's October 14, 2009 decision (reference 02) that concluded Garlandronn Benton (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 10, 2009. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Kris Travis, Employment Manager, and Barb Larsen, Production Training Manager. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on November 27, 2007, as a full-time janitor. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook. The employer did not issue the claimant any warnings during his employment. For approximately six months the claimant was allowed to wash his work clothes at work and take them home to fold them. When getting ready to punch out the night shift supervisor asked him what he was carrying. The claimant told him and showed the supervisor what was in the bag. The supervisor noted that it was the claimant's clothes. He took the claimant's identification and told him he was suspended. The claimant was confused.

The night shift supervisor took two bags of clothes to the employer. He told the employer that the claimant attempted to steal the two bags. On October 7, 2009, the employer terminated the claimant for attempting to take two bags full of clothes from the employer. The night shift supervisor did not testify or provide a statement for the hearing. He was on a medical leave of absence.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for 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.

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). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). If a party has the power to produce more explicit and direct evidence than it chooses to do, it may be fairly inferred that other evidence would lay open deficiencies in that party's case. Crosser v. Iowa Department of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976). The employer did not present testimony written statements and, therefore, did not provide sufficient eye witness evidence of job-related misconduct to rebut the claimant's denial of said conduct. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

**DECISION:**

The representative's October 14, 2009 decision (reference 02) is affirmed. The employer has not met its proof to establish job related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs