

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**MARY N BANAK**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-10436-AT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SWIFT & COMPANY**  
Employer

**OC: 10/05/08 R: 02**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Swift & Company filed a timely appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated October 30, 2008, reference 01, that allowed benefits to Mary N. Banak. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held November 25, 2008, with Ms. Banak participating. Human Resources Coordinator Aaron Vawter participated for the employer.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for misconduct in connection with her employment?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having heard the testimony of the witnesses and having examined all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Mary N. Banak was a production worker for Swift & Company from March 31, 2008, until she was discharged October 2, 2008. She was discharged for poor attendance. She was absent without contact on September 26, and 27, 2008. She was also absent on August 25, 2008, because of car problems. She was absent without contact on April 30, 2008.

Ms. Banak had requested time off for September 26, and 27, 2008. Her supervisor, Victor Gonzalez, denied the request. Human Resources Coordinator Aaron Vawter told Ms. Banak that the request had been denied.

Ms. Banak has received unemployment insurance benefits since filing a claim effective October 5, 2008.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The question is whether the evidence establishes that the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with her employment. It does.

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.

Excessive unexcused absenteeism is one form of misconduct. See Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984). The evidence persuades the administrative law judge that Mr. Vawter had told Ms. Banak that she was not authorized to take off work on September 26, and 27, 2008. Those two absences viewed in the context of an absence for car problems a month earlier is sufficient to establish excessive unexcused absenteeism. Benefits are withheld.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. 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.

b. (1) 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. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The question of whether Ms. Banak must repay the benefits she has received is remanded to the Unemployment Insurance Services Division.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated October 30, 2008, reference 01, is reversed. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefits amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The question of whether she must repay benefits already received is remanded to the Unemployment Insurance Services Division.

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Dan Anderson  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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