

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

**AHMED A AL KAWAZ**

Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 23A-UI-04727-JT-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**UNIVERSAL DEDICATED OF NE & WI LLC**

Employer

**OC: 01/08/23**

**Claimant: Appellant (1R)**

Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

Iowa Code Section 96.5(1)(d) – Voluntary Quit

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On May 6, 2023, Ahmed Al Kawaz (claimant) filed a late appeal from the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision that disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account could not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on December 22, 2022 without good cause attributable to the employer and due to a non-work-related illness or injury. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on May 25, 2023. Claimant participated. Burton Raymond represented the employer. Exhibit A, the online appeal was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision, the reference 01 fact-finding deputy's notes, the March 8, 2023 (reference 02) decision, DBRO, WAGE-A, and KFFV.

**ISSUES:**

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

Ahmed Al-Kawaz (claimant) established an original claim for benefits that was effective January 8, 2023. At the time the claimant established his claim for benefits, the claimant provided a Lovilia, Iowa mailing address. The claimant continued to reside at the Lovilia address until the end of February 2023.

The claimant's first language is Arabic. The claimant is fluent or nearly fluent in English. The claimant occasionally requires an utterance be rephrased. The claimant studied English in school for 10 years before emigrating from Iraq to the United States in 2010. The claimant has continued to informally work on his English language skills since that time.

On February 14, 2023, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision to the claimant's Lovilia, Iowa last-known address of record. The February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision prompted followed a February 13, 2023 in which the

claimant participated. At the time of the fact-finding interview, the IWD deputy told the claimant to expect a decision in the mail in the coming days. The reference 01 decision disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account could not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on December 22, 2022 without good cause attributable to the employer and due to a non-work-related illness or injury. The reference 01 decision stated the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by February 24, 2023 or was received by the Appeals Section by that date. The reference 01 decision included clear and concise instructions for filing an appeal, along with contact information for the Appeals Bureau. The reference 01 decision included a customer service telephone number for Iowa Workforce Development for the claimant to use if he had questions about the decision. The United States Postal Service delivered the reference 01 decision to the claimant's address of record in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. The claimant received the decision and reviewed a portion of the decision. The claimant did not review the statement of appeal rights and did not note the telephone number for IWD customer service. The claimant decided he did not fully understand the decision, but took no further action on the matter by the February 24, 2023 appeal deadline or at any time prior to May 6, 2023. The claimant did not file an appeal by the February 24, 2023 deadline or at time prior to May 6, 2023.

The claimant discontinued making weekly claims following a claim for the week that ended February 25, 2023.

Effective March 1, 2023, the claimant changed girlfriends and commenced residing in an apartment on Hubbell Avenue in Des Moines. The claimant's former girlfriend continued to reside at the Lovilia, Iowa address. The claimant did not contact Iowa Workforce Development to update his mailing address. The claimant did not complete a mail forwarding request with the United States Postal Service. The claimant states his new girlfriend submitted a mail forwarding request on his behalf to the USPS at the start of March 2023.

On March 8, 2023, Iowa Workforce Development mailed a March 8, 2023 (reference 02) overpayment decision to the claimant's Lovilia, Iowa address of record. The reference 02 decision held the claimant was overpaid \$2,204.00 in benefits for four weeks between January 8, 2023 and February 4, 2023, based on the earlier disqualification decision. The reference 02 decision stated the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by March 18, 2023 or was received by the Appeals Section by that date. The reference 02 decision stated that if the deadline for appeal fell on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the deadline would be extended to the next working day. March 18, 2023 was a Saturday and the next working day was Monday, March 20, 2023. The United States Postal Service forwarded the March 8, 2023 (reference 02) decision to the claimant's Des Moines address.

On May 6, 2023, the claimant completed and transmitted an online appeal from the March 8, 2023 (reference 02) decision with his girlfriend's assistance. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on May 6, and treated the appeal as also a late appeal from the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) disqualification decision.

## **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

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, subsections 10 and 11, 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 ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency 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).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(a). See also *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(b).

The evidence in the record establishes 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). One 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).

No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2)(c).

The evidence in the record establishes an untimely appeal from the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision disqualification decision. The evidence establishes that the claimant received the reference 01 decision in a timely manner, had a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal by the February 24, 2023 appeal deadline, but unreasonably delayed filing the appeal to May 6, 2023. The late filing of the appeal was not attributable to the Iowa Workforce Development error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. There is not good cause to treat the late appeal as a timely appeal. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2). Because the appeal was untimely, the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the decision from which the appellant appeals in the present matter. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).


**DECISION:**

The claimant's appeal from the February 14, 2023 (reference 01) decision was untimely. The decision that disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on December 22, 2022 without good cause attributable to the employer remains in effect.

In the event this decision regarding timeliness of appeal is reversed upon further appeal, there is sufficient evidence in the record for a decision regarding the employment separation without need for further hearing.

**REMAND:**

Based on the claimant's testimony that he was unable to perform work due to illness during the time when his claim was active, this matter is REMANDED to Iowa Workforce Development Benefits Bureau for an initial determination of whether the claimant was able to work and available for work during the period of January 8, 2023 through February 25, 2023.



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James E. Timberland  
Administrative Law Judge

May 31, 2023  
Decision Dated and Mailed

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**APPEAL RIGHTS.** If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
Online: [eab.iowa.gov](http://eab.iowa.gov)**

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.

**AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL 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.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

**Note to Parties:** YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or 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.

**Note to Claimant:** It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

**SERVICE INFORMATION:**

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

**DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN.** Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4th Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

**UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:**

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que está en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

**Nota para las partes:** USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

**Nota para el reclamante:** es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

**SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:**

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.