

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

THOMAS WILLIAMS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 12A-UI-14922-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CURRAN TRANSFER INC
Employer

OC: 10/28/12
Claimant: Respondent (2-R)

Section 96.4(3) – Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer, Curran Transfer Inc. (Curran), filed an appeal from a decision dated December 14, 2012, reference 03. The decision allowed benefits to the claimant, Thomas Williams. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on January 23, 2013. The claimant did not participate as he died January 15, 2013. The employer participated by Fleet Manager Bob Saskowski and Accounting Representative Sandy Sander.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was able and available for work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Thomas Williams began employment with Curran on October 22, 2012, as a full-time over-the-road truck driver. Drivers are required to provide a current phone number to the employer and keep that information current so they can be reached for dispatch.

Thomas Williams has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of October 28, 2012. He specified he was still working and reported wages. He last worked on November 15, 2012. The employer attempted to contact him for the next three days but he did not answer the phone. Curran left messages on his voice mail to call in for dispatch but he never called back.

Thomas Williams has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of October 28, 2012.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.4-3 provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

871 IAC 24.23(29) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(29) Failure to work the major portion of the scheduled workweek for the claimant's regular employer.

Thomas Williams was not able and available for work when he filed his claim because he was still working and not available after November 15, 2012, because he did not respond to the employer's messages to take dispatch. If he did not make himself available to his regular employer he is ineligible for benefits under the provisions of the above Administrative Code section.

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 claimant has received unemployment benefits to which he is not entitled. The question of whether the claimant must repay these benefits is remanded to the UIS division.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of December 14, 2012, reference 03, is reversed. Thomas Williams is not eligible for benefits as he was not able and available for work. The issue of whether the claimant must repay the unemployment benefits is remanded to UIS division for determination.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/css