

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**NANCY M VANDERECKEN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-17794-S2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**AYM INC**  
Employer

**OC: 03/29/09**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Nancy VanderEcken (claimant) appealed a representative's November 24, 2009 decision (reference 01) that concluded she was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work with A Y M (employer) for violation of a known company rule. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for January 6, 2010. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Marlene Dobraska, Human Resources Representative, and Jarod Johnson, Industrial Technician/Acting Supervisor.

**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 8, 1999, as a full-time machine operator. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on February 8, 2001. The clean air law changed and the employer changed work rules about smoking. Meetings were held with employees and signs were posted. The employer could be fined if employees do not comply with the law.

On October 29, 2009, the employer saw the claimant smoking in an unauthorized area on work time. The employer told the claimant not to do that again. On October 30, 2009, the employer saw the claimant smoking in an unauthorized area during work time. The employer sent the claimant home. On November 2, 2009, the employer terminated the claimant.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was 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). Repeated failure to follow an employer's instructions in the performance of duties is misconduct. Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Company, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa App. 1990). An employer has a right to expect employees to follow instructions in the performance of the job. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by repeatedly failing to follow the employer's instructions. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The representative's November 24, 2009 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because the claimant was discharged

from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs