

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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Appeal Number: 05A-UI-02199-LT
OC: 01-23-05 R: 04
Claimant: Respondent (1)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

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.

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.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may 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. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Iowa Code §96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed a timely appeal from the February 22, 2005, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on March 21, 2005. Claimant did participate. Employer did participate through Steve Bartholomew.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed as a full-time production worker through January 21, 2005 when he was discharged pursuant to employer's no-fault attendance policy. Claimant was last absent on January 3. He was also absent on December 28, August 3, and July 31 and 22, 2004. All

absences were either related to a disputed work related back injury from October 2003 or personal illness.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

Excessive absences are not considered misconduct unless unexcused. Absences due to properly reported illness or injury cannot constitute job misconduct since they are not volitional. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982).

Reported absences related to injury and illnesses are excused for the purpose of the Iowa Employment Security Act. An employer's no-fault absenteeism policy is not dispositive of the issue of qualification for benefits. Because the final absence for which he was discharged was related to properly reported illness and injury and there was a 2½ week delay in the discharge, no final or current incident of unexcused absenteeism has been established and no disqualification is imposed.

DECISION:

The February 22, 2005, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

dml/s