

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

UTHMAN T AL SAMRAAY
Claimant

JACOBSON TRANSPORTATION CO INC
Employer

APPEAL 17A-UI-04680-LJ-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/26/17
Claimant: Appellant (5)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the April 20, 2017 (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon a determination that claimant voluntarily quit work by failing to report to work for three days in a row and not notifying the employer of the reason. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on May 22, 2017. The claimant, Uthman T. Al Samraay, participated. The employer, Jacobson Transportation Company, Inc., participated through Erin Clark, Human Resources. The administrative law judge left the hearing record open until the end of business on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, to allow claimant an opportunity to submit relevant medical documentation requested by the administrative law judge. Claimant did not provide this documentation.

ISSUES:

Is the appeal timely?

Did claimant voluntarily leave the employment with good cause attributable to the employer or did employer discharge the claimant for reasons related to job misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed full time, most recently as a regional truck driver, from September 21, 2015, until February 3, 2017, when he was discharged. Claimant last reported to work on February 1, 2017. That day, he was involved in a vehicular accident in Indiana. It remains unclear, after taking testimony, whether this accident occurred in his work vehicle. At the time of the accident, claimant lost consciousness and was in a coma for approximately two weeks. He was ultimately discharged from the hospital in Indiana on March 17, 2017. Clark testified that claimant's father came to the employer on February 13, 2017, to pick up claimant's personal possessions. After claimant was released from the hospital, he reported back to the employer and spoke to his manager. The employer indicated that claimant asked for payment of a hospital bill during this conversation.

Claimant gave inconsistent testimony regarding whether he received the unemployment insurance decision dated April 20, 2017. The deadline to appeal this decision was April 30, 2017. As April 30 fell on a Sunday, claimant had until May 1, 2017, to file his appeal. Claimant's appeal is dated May 2, 2017. Initially, claimant testified that he received it. He later stated that he did not receive the decision, so he went into the local office and they resent it. He then testified that he received this decision the week before he filed his appeal.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant did not file a timely appeal.

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, subsection 10, 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 calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the 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. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976). The record in this case shows 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv., 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The 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. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The April 20, 2017 (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision is modified with no change in effect. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

Elizabeth A. Johnson
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

lj/scn