

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JAMES K CRAWLEY
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 15A-UI-02026-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MANPOWER INTERNATIONAL INC
Employer

OC: 12/07/14
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(2)(a) – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the February 3, 2015, reference 05, decision that that allowed benefits to the claimant provided he was otherwise eligible and that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on an Agency conclusion that the claimant had been discharged on January 7, 2015 for no disqualifying reason. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on March 16, 2015. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice instructions to provide a telephone number for the hearing and did not participate. Kelly Adams, Associate Recruiter, represented the employer. Exhibit One was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the Agency's record of benefits disbursed to the claimant. The administrative law judge took official notice of the December 22, 2014, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant provided he was otherwise eligible and that held that employer Bertch Cabinet Manufacturing, Inc., could be charged for benefits, based on an Agency conclusion that the claimant had been discharged on December 1, 2014, for no disqualifying reason. The administrative law judge took official notice of the December 31, 2014, reference 04, decision that denied benefits effective December 7, 2014, based on an Agency conclusion that the claimant was at that time still employed with Manpower International, Inc., and that the claimant was not partially unemployed at that time. The administrative law judge took official notice of the Agency's administrative records concerning the claimant's quarterly wages as reported by his employers. The administrative law judge took official notice of the fact-finding materials for the limited purpose of determining whether the employer participated in the fact-finding interview and, if not, whether the claimant engaged in fraud or intentional misrepresentation in connection with the fact-finding interview.

ISSUES:

Whether the claimant's discharge from the Manpower International, Inc., employment on January 7, 2015, was for misconduct in connection with the employment that disqualifies the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits.

Whether the employer's account may be charged for benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant began his most recent employment with Manpower International, Inc., on December 2, 2014 and was immediately placed in a full-time, temp-to-hire work assignment at Bertch Cabinet Manufacturing, Inc. The claimant had been discharged from employment with Bertch on December 1, 2014 for no disqualifying reason. The claimant's work hours in the temporary work assignment were 6:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. On January 7, 2015, Manpower discharged the claimant from the assignment for allegedly being late to work that day. The employer has no record to support the assertion that the claimant was late that day. At some point in the claimant's relationship with Manpower, the employer had the claimant sign to acknowledge the employer's handbook policies. The employer did not have the claimant sign a separate end-of-assignment notification requirement.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. *Huntoon v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proof in this matter. See Iowa Code section 96.6(2). Misconduct must be substantial in order to justify a denial of unemployment benefits.

Misconduct serious enough to warrant the discharge of an employee is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits. See Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661 (Iowa 2000). The focus is on deliberate, intentional, or culpable acts by the employee. See Gimbel v. Employment Appeal Board, 489 N.W.2d 36, 39 (Iowa Ct. App. 1992).

While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of the current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act(s). The termination of employment must be based on a current act. See 871 IAC 24.32(8). In determining whether the conduct that prompted the discharge constituted a "current act," the administrative law judge considers the date on which the conduct came to the attention of the employer and the date on which the employer notified the claimant that the conduct subjected the claimant to possible discharge. See also Greene v. EAB, 426 N.W.2d 659, 662 (Iowa App. 1988).

Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. See 871 IAC 24.32(4). When it is in a party's power to produce more direct and satisfactory evidence than is actually produced, it may fairly be inferred that the more direct evidence will expose deficiencies in that party's case. See Crosser v. Iowa Dept. of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976).

In order for a claimant's absences to constitute misconduct that would disqualify the claimant from receiving unemployment insurance benefits, the evidence must establish that the claimant's *unexcused* absences were excessive. See 871 IAC 24.32(7). The determination of whether absenteeism is excessive necessarily requires consideration of past acts and warnings. However, the evidence must first establish that the most recent absence that prompted the decision to discharge the employee was unexcused. See 871 IAC 24.32(8). Absences related to issues of personal responsibility such as transportation and oversleeping are considered unexcused. On the other hand, absences related to illness are considered excused, provided the employee has complied with the employer's policy regarding notifying the employer of the absence. Tardiness is a form of absence. See Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984). Employers may not graft on additional requirements to what is an excused absence under the law. See Gaborit v. Employment Appeal Board, 743 N.W.2d 554 (Iowa Ct. App. 2007). For example, an employee's failure to provide a doctor's note in connection with an absence that was due to illness properly reported to the employer will not alter the fact that such an illness would be an excused absence under the law. Gaborit, 743 N.W.2d at 557.

The employer has presented insufficient evidence, and insufficiently direct and satisfactory evidence, to establish misconduct in connection with the Manpower employment. The employer has presented insufficient evidence to establish that the claimant was indeed late on January 7, 2015. The employer's sole witness had no contact with the claimant and no personal knowledge of the claimant's employment. The employer lacked documentation to support the assertion that the claimant was indeed late on January 7, 2015. Even if the claimant had been late on January 7, 2015, that single absence would be insufficient to establish excessive unexcused absences and would not constitute misconduct in connection with the employment. The employer cannot borrow an attendance history from a separate employer and separate employment with Bertch Cabinets to establish misconduct in connection with the Manpower employment. Based on the evidence in the record and application of the appropriate law, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant was discharged for no disqualifying reason. Accordingly, the claimant is eligible for benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged for benefits paid to the claimant.

DECISION:

The February 3, 2015, reference 05, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged for no disqualifying reason. The claimant is eligible for benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs