

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

IGNACIO MEDINA
Claimant

JENSEN CONSTRUCTION CO
Employer

APPEAL 22A-UI-07857-B2-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 12/20/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
Iowa Code § 96.5(5) – Wages
Iowa Code § 96.19(38)a & b – Total and Partial Unemployment
Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the March 11, 2022, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that concluded claimant was overpaid \$27.00 in regular unemployment insurance benefits. After proper notice, a telephone hearing was conducted on May 12, 2022. The hearing was held together with Appeals 22A-UI-07858-B2-T and 22A-UI-07859-B2-T. The claimant participated. Official notice of the administrative records was taken.

ISSUES:

Was the appeal timely filed?
Is claimant overpaid benefits?
Is the claimant totally, partially or temporarily unemployed?
Did the claimant correctly report wages earned?
Is the claimant eligible for benefits based on the wages earned?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on March 11, 2022. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by March 21, 2022. The appeal was not filed until April 1, 2022, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant stated he did not believe he received this decision, and only appealed after he received two other overpayment decisions later in the month.

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant established a claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of December 20, 2020. Claimant's weekly benefit amount (WBA) was \$605.00.

Claimant began employment for this employer in 2008. Claimant is employed as a full-time carpenter earning \$39.25 per hour.

Claimant filed weekly continued claims for the period of December 26, 2020 and February 20, 2021. During this period, claimant was partially and temporarily unemployed.

IWD conducted an audit of the claim, and contacted the employer to verify the claimant’s wages earned with employer, Jensen Construction (See fact-finding documents). A review of the administrative file reflects the claimant did not report the same wages at the employer.

Because the claimant did not accurately report his wages during this same period, an overpayment of \$27.00 was determined by IWD (See fact-finding documents). Claimant did not dispute wages reported by employer.

The agency established the overpayment based upon the following wages and payments made to the claimant: (See fact-finding documents)

WEEK ENDING	WAGES REPORTED	WAGES EARNED	BENEFITS PAID	BENEFITS ENTITLED	OVERPAYMENT
1-30-21	350.00	377.00	406.00	389.00	27.00
			NET TOTAL		27.00

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes as follows:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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. . . . 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.

The ten calendar days for appeal begin 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. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.2(96)(1) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

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. IDJS*, 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. IDJS*, 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. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant may not have had 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 potentially due to an 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 is therefore deemed timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code Section 96.6-2, and the administrative law judge retains jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See, *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

Iowa Code section 96.3(3) provides:

3. Partial unemployment. An individual who is partially unemployed in any week as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "b", and who meets the conditions of eligibility for benefits shall be paid with respect to that week an amount equal to the individual's weekly benefit amount less that part of wages payable to the individual with respect to that week in excess of one-fourth of the individual's weekly benefit amount. The benefits shall be rounded to the lower multiple of one dollar.

Iowa Code § 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", subparagraph (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".

(emphasis added).

Iowa Code § 96.19(38)b provides:

As used in this chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

38. "Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work, or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.18 provides:

Wage-earnings limitation. An individual who is partially unemployed may earn weekly a sum equal to the individual's weekly benefit amount plus \$15 before being disqualified for excessive earnings. If such individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus \$15, the formula for wage deductions shall be a sum equal to the individual's weekly benefit amount less that part of wages, payable to the individual with respect to that week and rounded to the lower multiple of one dollar, in excess of one-fourth of the individual's weekly benefit amount.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-23.3(1) provides:

(1) "Wages" means all remuneration for personal services, including commissions and bonuses and the cash value of all remuneration in any medium other than cash. Wages also means wages in lieu of notice, separation allowance, severance pay, or dismissal pay. The reasonable cash value of remuneration in any medium other than cash shall be estimated and determined in accordance with rule 23.2(96).

Iowa Code section 96.3(7) provides, in pertinent part:

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.

The credible evidence in this case is that claimant received \$27.00 in regular unemployment insurance benefits based upon wages initially reported. However, following an audit by IWD, it was determined that claimant actually earned more wages than initially reported. No evidence was presented that the wages reported by the employer to IWD were inaccurate or incorrect. Consequently, the claimant was able to collect both wages and unemployment insurance benefits each week.

Based upon the wages earned, the claimant was overpaid benefits in the amount of \$27.00, to which claimant was not entitled. The administrative law judge concludes therefore, that the overpayment was correctly calculated.

DECISION:

The March 11, 2022 (reference 02) is affirmed. The claimant was overpaid \$27.00 in regular unemployment insurance benefits, which must be repaid.



Blair A. Bennett
Administrative Law Judge

June 9, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

bab/mh