

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SUSAN R RIVERA
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-07413-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WEST FORK SERVICES INC
Employer

OC: 09/19/10
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Susan Rivera (claimant) appealed a representative's May 27, 2011 decision (reference 03) that concluded she was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work with West Fork Services (employer) for dishonesty in connection with her work. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for June 29, 2011. The claimant participated personally and through Micki Fish, former co-worker. The employer participated by Sonya Middleton, director of service/human resources.

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 having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on October 9, 2009, as a full-time support staff person. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on October 9, 2009. The employer issued the claimant warnings on January 25 and April 25, 2011, for failure to follow the employer's policies.

On or about April 26, 2011, the employer learned that the claimant was arriving at work after her 7:00 a.m. start time but recording on her time card that she arrived at 7:00 a.m. The claimant did this four days per week since September 2009. The claimant admitted the practice, indicating she thought the employer wanted her to write down her time in 15 minute increments. The employer terminated the claimant on April 26, 2011, for falsifying her time card.

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). As persuasive authority, the falsification of an activity log book constitutes job misconduct. Smith v. Sorensen, 222 Nebraska 599, 386 N.W.2d 5 (1986). 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 May 27, 2011 decision (reference 03) 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.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw