

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**SEAN P UMBER**  
Claimant

**MIDWESTERN TRADING INC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 21A-UI-12490-ML-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 02/14/21**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting  
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the March 29, 2021 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that found he was disqualified from receipt of benefits based upon his voluntarily leaving his employment without good cause. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on July 7, 2021. The claimant, Sean UMBER, participated personally. The employer, Midwestern Trading, Inc., participated through witness Tucker Sindlinger.

**ISSUE:**

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A decision that disqualified the claimant from receipt of unemployment insurance benefits was mailed to the claimant's correct address of record on March 29, 2021. The claimant received the decision prior to the appeal deadline listed on the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 8, 2021. The claimant filed his appeal on May 10, 2021, by calling in to the IowaWORKS – Eastern Iowa office. Claimant testified he received the March 29, 2021, decision; however, he did not read the warning providing that his appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 8, 2021. Claimant testified that he took some time to discuss his options with a few people and his wife before ultimately deciding to appeal the March 29, 2021, decision.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code § 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 § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 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 § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 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 § 96.8, subsection 5.

(emphasis added).


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 appeal in this case was filed over the phone and via mail on May 10, 2021. 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 because he had received the decision in the mail prior to the due date. Claimant's 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). As such, 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 March 29, 2021 (reference 01) decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



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Michael J. Lunn  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau  
1000 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209  
Fax (515)478-3528

July 16, 2021  
Decision Dated and Mailed

mjl/scn

**NOTE TO CLAIMANT:**

This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision.

If you do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations and are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** More information about how to apply for PUA is available online at:

[www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information](http://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information)

You may find information about food, housing, and other resources at <https://covidrecoveryiowa.org/> or at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/node/3250>

Iowa Finance Authority also has additional resources at <https://www.iowafinance.com/about/covid-19-ifa-recovery-assistance/>