

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

MARILYN GREEN
Claimant

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

APPEAL 16A-UI-07629-CL-T
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION

OC: 06/12/16
Claimant: Respondent (6)

Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer/appellant filed an appeal from the June 30, 2016, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that concluded claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. Notices of hearing were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing scheduled for July 29, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. The appellant was not available at the telephone number provided for the scheduled hearing and no hearing was held.

ISSUE:

Should the appeal be dismissed based on the appellant's failure to appear and participate?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. The appellant was not available at the telephone number provided for the scheduled hearing and did not participate or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The hearing notice instruction specifically advises parties of the date and time of the hearing. It also states:

You must register for the hearing immediately!

You must register your phone number and the name(s) and phone number(s) of any witness(es) with the Appeals Bureau. If you do not register, the judge will not be able to call you or your witness(es) for the hearing.

The back page of the hearing notice provides further instruction and warning:

If you do not participate in the hearing, the judge may dismiss the appeal or issue a decision without considering your evidence or witness(es).

The hearing notice also states:

Postponement Of Hearing

The judge may postpone the hearing for good cause. You should send a written request for postponement to the Appeals Bureau at least three days before the hearing date.

The information quoted above also appears on the hearing notice in Spanish.

The representative's decision had concluded that the claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

The Agency rules at Iowa Admin. Code r. 26.14(7) provide:

If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party. Instead, the presiding officer shall inquire ex parte as to why the party was late in responding to the notice of hearing. For good cause shown, the presiding officer shall reopen the record and cause further notice of hearing to be issued to all parties of record. The record shall not be reopened if the presiding officer does not find good cause for the party's late response to the notice of hearing.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

The Iowa Supreme Court has opined that a default should not be set aside for ordinary negligence or want of ordinary care. Defaults should not be set aside where the movant ignores plain mandates with ample opportunity to abide. See *Houlihan v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 545 N.W.2d 863 (Iowa 1996). Here, the appellant failed to prosecute the case promptly and as such the appellant is in default and the appeal shall be dismissed. Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 26.14(7). The representative's decision remains in force and effect.

The appellant can make a written request to the administrative law judge that the hearing be reopened within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The written request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the end of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at its scheduled time. The appellant also has the option to appeal the decision directly to the Employment Appeal Board, whose address is listed at the top right caption.

DECISION:

The June 30, 2016, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision allowing benefits remains in effect as the appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed.

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

Decision Dated and Mailed

cal/pjs