

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SEIDA CORALIC

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-05855-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

BEEF PRODUCTS INC

Employer

OC: 03/27/11

Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Seida Coralic (claimant) appealed a representative's April 20, 2011 decision (reference 01) that concluded she was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work with Beef Products (employer) for violation of a known company rule. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for May 26, 2011. The claimant was represented by Michael McEnroe, Attorney, and participated personally. The employer participated by Rick Wood, Human Resources Manager, and Jennifer Stubbs, Human Resources Benefits Supervisor. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

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 considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on December 18, 2007, as a full-time laborer. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on December 18, 2007. On March 27, 2011, the employer issued the claimant a written warning regarding chewing gum at work. The employer issued the claimant written warnings on January 19 and February 3, 2011, for attendance issues. The absences were due to medical issues and properly reported.

In mid-February 2011, the claimant reported sexual harassment in the workplace more than once. In addition she reported a work-related injury. The Human Resources Manager told the claimant that the company did not like it when employees reported injuries. The employer did nothing regarding the sexual harassment complaint as far as the claimant knew. On March 22, 2011, the employer issued the claimant a written warning and suspension for going to break early. The claimant denied this and asked the employer to view the camera footage. The employer did not respond. The claimant was afraid she would lose her job and signed the warning.

During the entirety of the claimant's employment she and other co-workers mixed chemicals for cleaning. The claimant was unaware of the rule. On March 26, 2011, the claimant mixed chemicals for cleaning. The employer terminated her on March 29, 2011.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for misconduct.

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.

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). An employer may discharge an employee for any number of reasons or no reason at all, but if it fails to meet its burden of proof to establish job related misconduct as the reason for the separation, employer incurs potential liability for unemployment insurance benefits related to that separation. Inasmuch as employer had not previously warned claimant about any of the issues leading to the separation, it has not met the burden of proof to establish that claimant acted deliberately or negligently in violation of company policy, procedure, or prior warning. If an employer expects an employee to conform to certain expectations or face discharge, appropriate (preferably written), detailed, and reasonable notice should be given. The employer did not provide sufficient evidence of job-related misconduct. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's April 20, 2011 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The employer has not met its proof to establish job related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs