

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**MELINDA J NASSIF**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 09A-UI-15842-DT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**KELLEY PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**  
Employer

**OC: 09/27/09**

**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Leaving  
Section 17A.12-3 – Non-appearance of Party  
871 IAC 26.8(5) – Decision on the Record  
871 IAC 26.14(7) – Late Call

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

An appeal was filed from a representative's unemployment insurance decision dated October 16, 2009 (reference 01) that concluded Melinda J. Nassif (claimant/respondent) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits after a separation from employment from Kelley Property Management (employer/appellant). Notices of hearing were mailed to the parties' last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 9:00 a.m. on November 24, 2009. The employer/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice and provide a telephone number at which a witness or representative could be reached for the hearing and did not participate in the hearing. The claimant responded to the hearing notice and indicated that she would participate in the hearing. When the administrative law judge contacted the claimant for the hearing, she agreed that the administrative law judge should make a determination based upon a review of the information in the available information. The administrative law judge considered the record closed at 9:10 a.m. At 9:20 a.m., the employer called the Appeals Section and requested that the record be reopened. Based on the appellant's failure to participate in the hearing, the available information, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

**ISSUE:**

Should the representative's decision be affirmed on a basis of a review of the available information?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The employer received the hearing notice prior to the November 24, 2009 hearing. The instructions inform the parties that if the party does not contact the Appeals Section and provide the phone number at which the party can be contacted for the hearing, the party will not be called for the hearing. The first time the employer contacted the Appeals Section was on November 24, 2009, 20 minutes after the scheduled start time for the hearing. The employer

had not read all the information on the hearing notice, and had assumed that the Appeals Section would initiate the telephone contact even without a response to the hearing notice.

The administrative law judge has conducted a careful review of the available information to determine whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

**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.

871 IAC 26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals section with the names and telephone numbers of its witnesses by the scheduled time of the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with 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 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.

At issue is a request to reopen the record made after the hearing had concluded. The request to reopen the record is denied because the party making the request failed to participate by reading and following the instructions on the hearing notice.

The administrative law judge has carefully reviewed the available information and concludes that the unemployment insurance decision previously entered in this case is correct and should be affirmed. 871 IAC 26.8(5).

**DECISION:**

The representative's unemployment insurance decision dated October 16, 2009 (reference 01) is affirmed. The decision holding the claimant qualified for benefits remains in effect.

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Lynette A. F. Donner  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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