

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ENRIQUETA HERNANDEZ
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-05978-M2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

OC: 04/03/11
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated April 27, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on June 1, 2011. Claimant participated and was represented by Attorney Mary Hamilton. Employer participated by Will Sager.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was discharged on or about March 23, 2011 because she was alleged to have pushed another employee off a ladder and caused the co-worker to fall about three feet. The claimant denies the allegation. No one else with direct knowledge of the incident testified. The claimant reported a workers' compensation injury early in March of 2011.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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 gravity of the incident, number of policy violations and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for misconduct when she was alleged to have pushed another employee such that the other employee fell. The claimant denied the allegations, and the employer had no one with direct knowledge testify. When it is in a party's power to produce more direct and satisfactory evidence than is actually produced, it may fairly be inferred that the more direct evidence will expose deficiencies in that party's case. **Crosser v. Iowa Dep't of Public Safety**, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976).

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated April 27, 2011, reference 01, is reversed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Stan McElderry
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

srm/css