

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**ROBIN L DYER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 20A-UI-01789-JE-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**EVERGREEN REAL  
ESTATE DEVELOPMENT**  
Employer

**OC: 02/02/20**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Leaving

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed a timely appeal from the February 21, 2020, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on March 16, 2020. The claimant participated in the hearing with former Administrative Assistant Kristina Cox and former Kitchen Manager Randi Lienamann. Gregory McClenahan, President, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer. Employer's Exhibits A through H were admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant voluntarily left her employment with good cause attributable to the employer.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time facility administrator for Rose Assisted Living from June 15, 2016 to February 2, 2020. She voluntarily left her employment because she felt it had become a hostile work environment.

The employer hired Judith Brumett as the new service administrator in the fall of 2019. Ms. Brumett told the employer the claimant was unhappy, dissatisfied and looking for other work.

On February 2, 2020, Ms. Brumett told the claimant the employer was advertising for her job on Indeed. The claimant went to the Indeed website and it did not list what employer was seeking a new facility administrator. The claimant had access to the employer's side of Indeed through her role as facility administrator and found it was the employer who was advertising for a facility manager.

The employer was on vacation on February 2, 2020, and the claimant emailed him to state she was resigning effective immediately due to a hostile work environment. The claimant cited the

ad for her job on Indeed and that the employer listened to “misinformation and embellishments” from other staff without asking the claimant directly about the issues.

The employer planned to give the claimant a performance improvement plan (PIP) February 10, 2020, when he returned from vacation and attached a copy of the PIP with his February 2, 2020, response to the claimant’s resignation email. The claimant chose to resign February 2, 2020, rather than accept the PIP.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$2,405.00 for the five weeks ending March 14, 2020.

The employer participated personally in the fact-finding interview through the statements of President Gregory McClenahan.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily left employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual’s wage credits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual’s employer, if so found by the department.

In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. 871 IAC 24.25. Leaving because of unlawful, intolerable, or detrimental working conditions would be good cause. 871 IAC 24.26(3),(4). Leaving because of dissatisfaction with the work environment is not good cause. 871 IAC 24.25(1). The claimant has the burden of proving that the voluntary leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code section 96.6-2.

While Ms. Brumett seemingly played both parties against each other and increased the tension between them, the employer had issues with the claimant’s performance and other employees also complained about tasks she failed to do in addition to Ms. Brumett’s duplicity. The employer discussed the issues with the claimant prior to her resignation notice February 2, 2020, and planned to give her a performance improvement plan when he returned from vacation February 10, 2020. He did, however, advertise for her position on Indeed, because Ms. Brumett told him the claimant was looking for other work. While it was disrespectful for the employer to place an ad for the claimant’s position without first speaking to her, that in itself does not equate to a hostile work environment.

Under these circumstances, the administrative law judge must conclude the claimant has not established that her leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer as that term is defined by Iowa law. Therefore, benefits must be denied.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)“b” as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

The claimant received benefits but has been denied benefits as a result of this decision. The claimant, therefore, was overpaid benefits.

Because the employer participated in the fact-finding interview, the claimant is required to repay the overpayment and the employer's account will not be charged for benefits paid.

Consequently, the claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,405.00 for the five weeks ending March 14, 2020.

**DECISION:**

The February 21, 2020, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left her employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The employer personally participated in the fact-finding interview within the meaning of the law. Therefore, the claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,405.00 for the five weeks ending March 14, 2020.

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Julie Elder  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

je/scn