

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JAMES A WOODRING
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-10278-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
NUNC PRO TUNC DECISION**

GINA'S BMW INC
Employer

**OC: 09/30/07 R: 03
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Gina's BMW (employer) appealed a representative's October 31, 2007 decision (reference 01) that concluded James Woodring (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for November 27, 2007. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Gina Dusterhoft, Owner. The claimant offered and Exhibit A was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the 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 that: The claimant was hired on March 14, 2003, as a full-time salesman. The employer was concerned that sales were slow. She investigated and found that the claimant was spending a lot of time on the computer at work looking at internet sites and writing e-mails of a personal nature. The employer sent an e-mail to the claimant on September 21, 2007, indicating the claimant was not to use the internet for anything that was not work-related.

The claimant received the e-mail and responded to it by stating he understood that sales were slow. He indicated he would look for another job. The employer responded by saying she was sure there were many opportunities in the area. The claimant thought that forbidding him from using the internet at work was unreasonable.

The following week, the claimant sent six personal e-mails and visited 39 websites. The websites related to sports, style, Rush Limbaugh, stocks, television, cooking, and other non-work subjects. The employer terminated the claimant on September 29, 2007, for failure to follow her instructions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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 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). Repeated failure to follow an employer's instructions in the performance of duties is misconduct. Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Company, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa App. 1990). An employer has a right to expect employees to follow instructions in the performance of the job. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by repeatedly failing to follow the employer's instructions. The claimant did not think the employer's instructions to him were reasonable. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such, the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department

in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant has received benefits since filing the claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits now constitute an overpayment that must be repaid.

DECISION:

The representative's October 31, 2007 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant was discharged for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,864.00.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw/pjs