

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JESSICA L MILLER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-04208-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY INC
Employer

OC: 01/31/10
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Good Samaritan Society, Inc (employer) appealed a representative's March 9, 2010 decision (reference 01) that concluded Jessica Miller (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 May 11, 2010. The claimant was represented by Willis Hamilton, Attorney at Law, and participated personally. The claimant's parents, Jerry and Amy Miller, participated in the hearing. The employer participated by Amanda Blocker, Administrator, and Karen Petersen, Housekeeping, Laundry, and Dietary Director.

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 July 2, 2008, as a full-time dietary aide and housekeeping assistant. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on May 2 and July 2, 2008. The claimant was diagnosed with comprehension and retention issues.

On January 11, 2010, the claimant was retrieving her housekeeping cart from the Alzheimer unit when a resident tried to escape. The claimant used her hands and then her body to block the resident from leaving and move the resident back into the unit. On January 14, 2010, the employer terminated the claimant because it said she pushed the resident. The resident was not harmed.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not 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). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). The employer did not provide sufficient evidence of job-related misconduct. The claimant prohibited the resident from leaving the unit without harming the resident.

If a party has the power to produce more explicit and direct evidence than it chooses to do, it may be fairly inferred that other evidence would lay open deficiencies in that party's case. Crosser v. Iowa Department of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976). The employer had the power to present testimony but chose not to do so. The employer did not provide first-hand testimony at the hearing and, therefore, did not provide sufficient eye witness evidence of job-related misconduct to rebut the claimant's denial of said conduct. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's March 9, 2010 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. 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