

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

KITTY M HARTSON
Claimant

MENARD INC
Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-07179-AW-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/29/20
Claimant: Respondent (2)

Iowa Code § 96.19(38) – Definitions – Total, partial unemployment
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Eligibility – A&A – Able to, available for, work search
Iowa Code § 96.7(2)A(2) – Charges – Same base period employment
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(26) – Eligibility – A&A – Part-time same hours, wages
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
PL 116-136, Sec. 2104 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from the June 23, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 14, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. Claimant participated. Employer participated through Paul Hammell, Attorney, and Mike Kannas, General Manager. Employer's Exhibit 1 was admitted. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

ISSUES:

Whether claimant is totally, partially or temporarily unemployed.
Whether claimant is able to and available for work.
Whether claimant is still employed at the same hours and wages.
Whether employer's account is subject to charge.
Whether claimant was overpaid benefits.
Whether claimant is eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant began her employment as a full-time Inventory Controller with Menard on December 8, 2017. Claimant took a voluntary leave of absence from work from March 30, 2020 until April 13, 2020 due to Covid-19. Employer had work available for claimant between March 30, 2020 and April 13, 2020. Claimant filed an initial claim for benefits effective March 29, 2020. The administrative record reflects that claimant has neither filed for nor received unemployment insurance benefits, since filing her original claim.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant was totally unemployed and not available for work between March 30, 2020 and April 13, 2020. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 96.19(38) provides:

"Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "totally unemployed" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. R. 871-24.23(10) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(10) The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

Iowa Code section 96.7(2)a(2) provides:

2. Contribution rates based on benefit experience.

a. (2) The amount of regular benefits plus fifty percent of the amount of extended benefits paid to an eligible individual shall be charged against the account of the employers in the base period in the inverse chronological order in which the employment of the individual occurred.

(a) However, if the individual to whom the benefits are paid is in the employ of a base period employer at the time the individual is receiving the benefits, and the individual is receiving the same employment from the employer that the individual received during the individual's base period, benefits paid to the individual shall not be charged against the account of the employer. This provision applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding subparagraph (3) and section 96.8, subsection 5.

(b) An employer's account shall not be charged with benefits paid to an individual who left the work of the employer voluntarily without good cause attributable to the employer or to an individual who was discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment, or to an individual who failed without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work or to accept suitable work with that employer, but shall be charged to the unemployment compensation fund. This paragraph applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

(c) The amount of benefits paid to an individual, which is solely due to wage credits considered to be in an individual's base period due to the exclusion and substitution of calendar quarters from the individual's base period under section 96.23, shall be charged against the account of the employer responsible for paying the workers' compensation benefits for temporary total disability or during a healing period under section 85.33, section 85.34, subsection 1, or section 85A.17, or responsible for paying indemnity insurance benefits.

From March 30, 2020 until April 13, 2020, claimant performed no work and received no wages. Therefore, claimant was totally unemployed. Because claimant was totally unemployed, she is required to be able to and available for work. Claimant has the burden of proving that she was able to and available for work. Claimant has not met that burden. Claimant was on a voluntary leave of absence from work due to Covid-19. While claimant's absence from work may have been for a good reason, it was voluntary nonetheless. Claimant was not available for work. Accordingly, benefits are denied.

Because claimant is not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits, claimant is also not eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. See PL 116-136 §2104(B).

Because no benefits were paid to claimant, the issues of overpayment and chargeability are moot.

NOTE TO CLAIMANT: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations, but

who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

The June 23, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is reversed. Claimant was totally unemployed and not available for work. Benefits are denied effective March 29, 2020. Claimant is not eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. The issues of overpayment and chargeability are moot.



Adrienne C. Williamson
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August 25, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

acw/mh