

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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

SARAH WOHLT
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 19A-UI-01789-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

RGIS LLC
Employer

OC: 01/27/19
Claimant: Respondent (2)

Section 96.5-1 - Voluntary Quit
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

RGIS (employer) appealed a representative's February 18, 2019, decision (reference 01) that concluded Sarah Wohlt (claimant) was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for March 14, 2019. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Amanda Gehring, District Manager. Exhibit D-1 was received into evidence. The claimant offered and Exhibit A was received into evidence.

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 performed services for the employer from October 12, 2017, to October 28, 2018, as a part-time inventory taker. She signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on October 12, 2017. The employer has a system where employees enter their availability with the employer. The employer schedules employees and employees can see schedules on an app. In August or September 2018, the claimant talked to the employer about time off for a housing voucher.

The claimant indicated to the employer she was not available to work on October 29, 30, and November 1, 2018. The employer had no work on October 31, 2018. The claimant was scheduled to work on November 2, 3, and 4, 2018. She did not appear for work or notify the employer of her absence. The employer called and sent texts to the claimant. She did not respond. On November 5, 2018, the employer sent a letter to her address of record indicating it considered her to have quit when she did not appear for work or notify the employer of her absence. The claimant never received the letter.

The claimant believed she requested time off from work from October 28 through November 10, 2018, to look for housing. The employer did not receive an availability sheet from the claimant

with those days indicated unavailable. The claimant next contacted the employer on or after November 13, 2018. She told the employer she had seen a doctor, was released to return to work, but did not feel comfortable working with a catheter. The employer said the claimant's health was a first priority and they could talk about the claimant's return to work in the future.

On November 27, 2018, the claimant had surgery. The claimant felt she could start working again after December 10, 2018, and called the employer. She was absent from work from November 1 to December 10, 2018. On January 4, 2019, the claimant met with the employer. At the meeting she told the employer she was absent on November 2, 3, and 4, 2018, due to medical reasons. The employer did not mention the November 5, 2018, letter.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of January 27, 2019. She received \$804.00 in benefits after the separation from employment. The employer participated personally at the fact finding interview on February 14, 2019, by Amanda Gehring.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily quit work 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.25(20) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. 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. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(20) The claimant left for compelling personal reasons; however, the period of absence exceeded ten working days.

A voluntary leaving of employment requires an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act of carrying out that intention. *Local Lodge #1426 v. Wilson Trailer*, 289 N.W.2d 608, 612 (Iowa 1980). The claimant's intention to voluntarily leave work was evidenced by her actions. She was absent from work for personal reasons for more than ten working days. When an employee is absent from work for more than ten working days for compelling personal reasons, her leaving is without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant left work for more than ten working days for compelling personal reasons. Her leaving was without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are denied.

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.

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 claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits that she was not entitled to receive. The employer participated personally in the fact finding interview and is not chargeable. The claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The representative's February 18, 2019, decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. 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 has received unemployment insurance benefits that she was not entitled to receive. The employer participated personally in the fact finding interview and is not chargeable. The claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/rvs