

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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MURPHY OIL USE INC  
c/o SHEAKLEY UNISERVICE INC  
PO BOX 1160  
COLUMBUS OH 43216-1160

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-01207-H2T  
OC: 10-30-05 R: 04  
Claimant: Respondent (1)

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the January 24, 2006, reference 03, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on March 10, 2006. The claimant did participate. The employer did participate through Patricia Sizemore, Store Manager.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as an assistant manager full time beginning December 16, 2005 through December 26, 2005 when she was discharged. When the claimant was discharged

she was not given any reason other than no position was available for her at that time. It was not until the hearing that the claimant learned she was being discharged for gasoline drive offs.

Later the claimant was told that she was discharged because the lottery was off by \$35.00 dollars. There is no evidence at all that the claimant stole lottery tickets. The claimant never changed out the lottery tickets, Ms. Sizemore changed out the lottery tickets. It appears Ms. Sizemore made the error changing out the lottery tickets as the claimant never changed out or had the authority to change out the lottery tickets.

The claimant was discharged when she had two automobiles drive off without paying for their gas on December 21, 2005. The claimant was training a new employee, Tony, and was cleaning the bathrooms. The claimant did not see the drive offs and was not able to get the license number or a description of the car so that a police complaint can be made. After the drive off occurs the employee is to fill out a form. The claimant filled out the form with Andy's name because Tony's name and the claimant's name were not in the computer because they were new employees. The claimant was not able to put in either her name or Tony's because the computer would not allow it. The claimant clearly indicated in the comment section of the form that the drive offs occurred during Tony's shift. The claimant did not intentionally allow anyone to steal from the store. Nor did she intentionally fill out the form incorrectly. The claimant had never been warned that her job was in jeopardy. The claimant had not been disciplined at all prior to her discharge.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

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). The employer discharged the claimant and has the burden of proof to show misconduct. Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). Poor work performance is not misconduct in the absence of evidence of intent. Miller v. Employment Appeal Board, 423 N.W.2d 211 (Iowa App. 1988).

The claimant was discharged after two automobiles drove off the site without paying for gas. The claimant did not intentionally allow people to steal gas from the station. The employer was not happy with the claimant's job performance. The claimant was entitled to fair warning that the employer was no longer going to tolerate her performance and conduct. Without fair warning the claimant had no way of knowing that there were changes she needed to make in order to preserve her employment.

Failure in job performance due to inability or incapacity is not considered misconduct because the actions were not volitional. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979). Where an individual is discharged due to a failure in job performance, proof of that individual's ability to do the job is required to justify disqualification, rather than accepting the employer's subjective view. To do so is to impermissibly shift the burden of proof to the claimant. Kelly v. IDJS, 386 N.W.2d 552 (Iowa App. 1986). Inasmuch as she did attempt to perform the job to the best of her ability but was unable to meet the employer's expectations, no intentional misconduct has been established, as is the employer's burden of proof. Cosper v. IDJS, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Accordingly, no disqualification pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a is imposed. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

#### DECISION:

The January 24, 2006, reference 03, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

tkh/tjc