

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

CHARLOTTE S ROYCE
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-10313-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

ALORICA
Employer

**OC: 09/30/07 R: 01
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Alorica (employer) appealed a representative's October 29, 2007 decision (reference 01) that concluded Charlotte Royce (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 November 27, 2007. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Jodi Heineman, Human Resources Generalist; Andy Newton, Team Manager; and Janelle Towns, Operations Manager. The employer offered and Exhibit One 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 having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on December 18, 2006, as a full-time customer relations manager. The employer did not issue the claimant any warnings.

On September 23, 2007, the employer told the claimant she would be taking customer calls. The employer normally asked for volunteers for a change of status and then appointed workers to take the customer calls. The claimant was upset about her change in status. She sent an e-mail to the employer indicating she did not "need to be treated like a piece of shit" and informing the employer she was going home for the day.

The claimant appeared for work on September 24, 2007. The employer walked the claimant out and took her badge. She assumed she had been terminated.

The claimant's and the employer's testimony is inconsistent. The administrative law judge finds the claimant's testimony to be more credible because she was an eyewitness to the events for which she was terminated. The employer provided one written statement to support its case.

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). 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 to provide written statements. The statements do not carry as much weight as live testimony, because the testimony is under oath and the witness can be questioned. The employer did not provide first-hand testimony at the hearing and, therefore, did not provide sufficient eyewitness 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 October 29, 2007 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The employer has not met its burden of proof to establish job-related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw