

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

TRISHA CURTISS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 20A-DUA-00864-SN-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 09/13/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal
PL 116-136, Sec. 2102 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On October 30, 2020, Claimant filed an appeal from an assessment for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits dated September 24, 2020, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for PUA benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on December 3, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. Claimant participated. The record consists of claimant's testimony. Official notice is taken of agency records.

ISSUE:

Whether the employer filed a timely appeal. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony of the witnesses and having considered all of the evidence in the record, makes the following findings of fact:

On September 24, 2020, a representative issued an assessment for PUA benefits that held that the claimant was which held claimant ineligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits. The assessment for PUA benefits also states that the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by October 5, 2020, or received by the Appeals Section on that date. The claimant's appeal was sent by email on October 30, 2020.

Claimant and her spouse retrieve their mail on a daily basis from a mailbox in her yard at the address listed on the assessment for PUA benefits. Their practice is to dump the mail in a plastic tote. Claimant then processes the mail once a week. Claimant could not be sure when she received the assessment for PUA benefits. Claimant's receipt of several notices regarding different forms of benefits from Iowa Workforce Development confused her about what steps she should take next.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The preliminary issue in this case is whether the employer timely appealed the representative's decision. Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides that unless the affected party (here, the claimant) files an appeal from the decision within ten calendar days, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied as set out by the decision.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

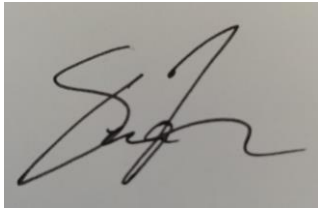
Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal postmarked as timely.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure have the appeal timely postmarked within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to error, misinformation, delay, or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). Since the claimant's appeal is not timely, the administrative law judge has no jurisdiction to rule on the merits of the claim for unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The claimant failed to file a timely appeal from the assessment for PUA benefits dated September 24, 2020, reference 01. That decision, which concluded claimant was ineligible to receive PUA benefits, remains in full force and effect.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sean M. Nelson', is shown within a rectangular frame.

Sean M. Nelson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
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Fax (515) 725-9067

December 21, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/mh