

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

NANCY A STEPHENS
Claimant

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
Employer

APPEAL 17-UI-05909-DG-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 05/14/17
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge for Misconduct
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated June 5, 2017, (reference 01) that held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on June 23, 2017. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Mary Eggenburg, Benefits Specialist. Employer's Exhibits 1 and 2, and claimant's Exhibit A were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant discharged for disqualifying job-related misconduct?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on May 15, 2017. Employer discharged claimant on May 15, 2017, because claimant violated employer's attendance policy after being warned on multiple occasions.

Claimant was discharged from employment due to a final incident of absenteeism that occurred on May 15, 2017. She was last warned on March 1, 2016, that she faced termination from employment upon another incident of unexcused absenteeism. Claimant was suspended without pay for Five days on that date. Claimant was also warned on January 4, 2016 about her attendance. Prior violations of employer's attendance policy occurred on May 10, 2017, May 9, 2017, and May 8, 2017.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Excessive absences are not considered misconduct unless unexcused. The determination of whether unexcused absenteeism is excessive necessarily requires consideration of past acts and warnings. The term "absenteeism" also encompasses conduct that is more accurately referred to as "tardiness." An absence is an extended tardiness, and an incident of tardiness is a limited absence. Absences related to issues of personal responsibility such as transportation, lack of childcare, and oversleeping are not considered excused. *Higgins v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984). Absences due to illness or injury must be properly reported in order to be excused. *Cosper v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982).

An employer is entitled to expect its employees to report to work as scheduled or to be notified in a timely manner as to when and why the employee is unable to report to work. The employer has credibly established that claimant was warned that further unexcused absences could result in termination of employment and the final absence was not excused. The final absence, in combination with claimant's history of unexcused absenteeism, is considered excessive. Benefits are withheld.

DECISION:

The June 5, 2017, (reference 01) decision is affirmed. Claimant was discharged from employment due to excessive, unexcused absenteeism. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

Duane L. Golden
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/scn