

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

IRENE REID  
1055 – 68<sup>TH</sup> ST UNIT 2  
WEST DES MOINES IA 50266-5712

WELLS FARGO BANK  
C/O TALX EMPLOYER SERVICES  
PO BOX 1160  
COLUMBUS OH 43216-1160

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-03195-ET  
OC: 02-19-06 R: 02  
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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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 March 10, 2006, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on April 6, 2006. The claimant participated in the hearing. Bret Smith, District Manager, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time lead teller for Wells Fargo Bank from May 16, 2003 to

November 30, 2005. On November 16 or 17, 2005, a co-worker asked the claimant to help her with a training class that all team members had to complete online. The co-worker left for lunch and left her computer on so the claimant could finish the training session for her. A few days later, the co-worker reported the situation to the employer and the claimant was discharged for violating the employer's code of ethics.

#### 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 proving disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to willful wrongdoing

or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). While the claimant's actions in completing the training session without the other employee present were inappropriate, the other employee involved did not participate in the hearing and therefore more credence must be given to the claimant's first-hand testimony. The claimant testified she did not know it was unethical to help someone with training but did concede there is a difference between helping someone who is there as opposed to doing the training work for someone who has gone to lunch. Although not condoning the claimant's actions, her behavior was an isolated incident of poor judgment and, as such, does not rise to the level of disqualifying job misconduct as defined by Iowa law. Consequently, benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The March 10, 2006, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

je/kkf