

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SAYACHER PAIJEBO

Claimant

APPEAL NO: 16A-UI-08837-JE-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

BROADLAWNS MEDICAL CENTER

Employer

OC: 06/12/16

Claimant: Respondent (2)

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Leaving
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the August 4, 2016, reference 02, 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 August 31, 2016. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Julie Kilgore, Vice-President of Human Resources and Adam Maus, Director of Nutrition and Environmental Services, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer. Employer's Exhibits One and Two were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant voluntarily left her employment.

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 environmental services technician for Broadlawns Medical Center from October 26, 2015 to June 8, 2016. She voluntarily left her employment by failing to call the employer or report for work June 2, June 7 and June 8, 2016. The employer sent the claimant certified letters June 10 and June 17, 2016, and the claimant signed for them June 13 and June 27, 2016. The letters cited the claimant's three consecutive workdays of no-call no-show absences and stated the employer accepted the claimant's resignation effective June 8, 2016. The employer had continuing work available.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$3,641.00 for the 11 weeks ending August 27, 2016.

The employer was waiting for the representative's fact-finding phone call but did not receive it. Shortly after the call was scheduled to take place another human resources employee notified Julie Kilgore, Vice-President of Human Resources, she received the call from the Department and it went to her voicemail. Ms. Kilgore tried to contact the Department within 15 minutes of

the scheduled start time of the fact-finding interview but did not receive a return call. Adam Maus, Director of Nutrition and Environmental Services, was also present waiting for the call. The employer also submitted written documentation for the hearing.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily left her employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.25(4) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(4) The claimant was absent for three days without giving notice to employer in violation of company rule.

Inasmuch as the claimant failed to report for work or notify the employer for three consecutive work days in violation of the employer's policy, she is considered to have voluntarily left her employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Therefore, benefits are denied.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if un rebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation,

the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

The claimant received benefits but has been denied benefits as a result of this decision. The claimant, therefore, was overpaid benefits. The employer was waiting for the fact-finder's phone call at the scheduled time of the interview but did not receive it. Within ten minutes of the start time another human resources employee informed the employer she received the call from the fact-finder and it went to her voicemail. The participating employer and witness attempted to

call the fact-finder within 15 minutes of the start time of the interview but did not receive a return call. Under these circumstances, the administrative law judge must conclude the employer's account shall not be charged for the claimant's benefits for non-participation in the fact-finding interview because it was ready to participate but was not called directly by the fact-finder and did not receive a call back even though it contacted the Department within 15 minutes of the scheduled time of the interview.

Because the employer participated in the fact-finding interview, the claimant is required to repay the overpayment and the employer will not be charged for benefits paid. Consequently, the claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$3,641.00 for the 11 weeks ending August 27, 2016.

DECISION:

The August 4, 2016, reference 02, decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left her employment without good cause attributable to the employer. 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. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$3,641.00 for the 11 weeks ending August 27, 2016.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/pjs