

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SARAH L ROGNESS-WATERS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-13124-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

LUTHERAN SERVICES IN IOWA INC
Employer

OC: 07/04/10
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5(7) – Vacation Pay

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Sarah Rogness-Waters, filed an appeal from a decision dated September 15, 2010, reference 02. The decision disqualified her from receiving unemployment benefits for the five-week period ending August 7, 2010, due to the receipt of vacation pay. After due notice was issued a hearing was held by telephone conference call on November 8, 2010. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer, Lutheran Services, participated by Director of Human Resources Marty Swanson.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant is disqualified from receiving benefits due to the receipt of vacation pay.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant was separated on June 30, 2010, and received vacation pay in the amount of \$3,918.19 based upon a rate of pay at \$16.81 per hour. The employer did designate the period of time to which the vacation pay was to be applied.

This is paid leave which may be used in any way the employee wishes. The employer does not specify which percentage of the paid leave may be used for vacation, sick leave, bereavement leave, holiday or other purpose.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the vacation pay was deducted for the correct period.

Iowa Code section 96.5-7 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits: ...

7. Vacation pay.

a. When an employer makes a payment or becomes obligated to make a payment to an individual for vacation pay, or for vacation pay allowance, or as pay in lieu of vacation, such payment or amount shall be deemed "wages" as defined in section 96.19, subsection 41, and shall be applied as provided in paragraph "c" hereof.

b. When, in connection with a separation or layoff of an individual, the individual's employer makes a payment or payments to the individual, or becomes obligated to make a payment to the individual as, or in the nature of, vacation pay, or vacation pay allowance, or as pay in lieu of vacation, and within ten calendar days after notification of the filing of the individual's claim, designates by notice in writing to the department the period to which the payment shall be allocated; provided, that if such designated period is extended by the employer, the individual may again similarly designate an extended period, by giving notice in writing to the department not later than the beginning of the extension of the period, with the same effect as if the period of extension were included in the original designation. The amount of a payment or obligation to make payment, is deemed "wages" as defined in section 96.19, subsection 41, and shall be applied as provided in paragraph "c" of this subsection 7.

c. Of the wages described in paragraph "a" (whether or not the employer has designated the period therein described), or of the wages described in paragraph "b", if the period therein described has been designated by the employer as therein provided, a sum equal to the wages of such individual for a normal workday shall be attributed to, or deemed to be payable to the individual with respect to, the first and each subsequent workday in such period until such amount so paid or owing is exhausted. Any individual receiving or entitled to receive wages as provided herein shall be ineligible for benefits for any week in which the sums, so designated or attributed to such normal workdays, equal or exceed the individual's weekly benefit amount. If the amount so designated or attributed as wages is less than the weekly benefit amount of such individual, the individual's benefits shall be reduced by such amount.

d. Notwithstanding contrary provisions in paragraphs "a", "b", and "c", if an individual is separated from employment and is scheduled to receive vacation payments during the period of unemployment attributable to the employer and if the employer does not designate the vacation period pursuant to paragraph "b", then payments made by the employer to the individual or an obligation to make a payment by the employer to the individual for vacation pay, vacation pay allowance or pay in lieu of vacation shall not be deemed wages as defined in section 96.19, subsection 41, for any period in excess of one week and such payments or the value of such obligations shall not be deducted for any period in excess of one week from the unemployment benefits the individual is otherwise entitled to receive under this chapter. However, if the employer designates more than one week as the vacation period pursuant to paragraph "b", the vacation pay, vacation pay allowance, or pay in lieu of vacation shall be considered wages and shall be deducted from benefits.

e. If an employer pays or is obligated to pay a bonus to an individual at the same time the employer pays or is obligated to pay vacation pay, a vacation pay allowance, or pay in lieu of vacation, the bonus shall not be deemed wages for purposes of determining benefit eligibility and amount, and the bonus shall not be deducted from unemployment benefits the individual is otherwise entitled to receive under this chapter.

871 IAC 24.16(3) provides:

(3) If the employer fails to properly notify the department within ten days after the notification of the filing of the claim that an amount of vacation pay, either paid or owed, is to be applied to a specific vacation period, the entire amount of the vacation pay shall be applied to the one-week period starting on the first workday following the last day worked as defined in subrule 24.16(4). However, if the individual does not claim benefits after layoff for the normal employer workweek immediately following the last day worked, then the entire amount of the vacation pay shall not be deducted from any week of benefits.

Because the employer did designate a time period to which the pay is to apply, the entire amount was correctly deducted from the first five weeks of benefits following the separation. The employer does not specify how the PTO may be used. All of it may be taken for sick leave or vacation as the employee chooses and is therefore not exempt under 871 IAC 24.13(d). It was a pay-out at the end of the employment as an accrued benefit of personal leave.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of September 15, 2010, reference 02, is affirmed. Sarah Rogness-Waters shall have vacation pay deducted from the five weeks of her unemployment benefits as the employer did designate the period to which it should be attributed

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/pjs