

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

STACEY D WATSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-01412-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MACHINE SHED
Employer

**OC: 01/05/14
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Machine Shed (employer) appealed a representative's February 4, 2014, decision (reference 01) that concluded Stacey Watson (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for February 27, 2014. The claimant did not provide a telephone number for the hearing and, therefore, did not participate. The employer participated by Julie Eckhardt, Assistant Chief Operating Executive. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on March 31, 2003, as a full-time server/expo. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on March 31, 2003. On July 19, 2013, the employer issued the claimant a written warning for absenteeism. The employer notified the claimant that further infractions could result in termination from employment. The claimant did not appear for work or notify the employer of her absence eight times in 2013. On December 12, 2013, the claimant again did not appear for work or notify the employer of her absence. The employer terminated the claimant.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of January 5, 2014. She has received no benefits after her separation from employment. The employer participated personally at the fact-finding interview on February 3, 2014, by Terry McHugh.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged for 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.

871 IAC 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 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 Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984).

An employer is entitled to expect its employees to report to work as scheduled or to be notified when and why the employee is unable to report to work. The employer has established that the 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 the claimant's history of unexcused absenteeism, is considered excessive. Benefits are withheld.

DECISION:

The representative's February 4, 2014, decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because the claimant was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The claimant has received no unemployment insurance benefits.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs