

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

STEVE R GUDMUNSON
Claimant

TYSON PET PRODUCTS INC
Employer

APPEAL 14A-UI-13225-KCT
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION

OC: 11/23/14
Claimant: Appellant (6)

Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

An appeal was filed from an unemployment insurance decision dated December 11, 2014 (reference 01) that denied benefits. Notice of hearing was mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, for a telephone hearing to be held at 11:00 a.m. on January 21, 2015. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system shows the appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice and provide a telephone number at which he could be reached for the hearing. The employer was not available at the telephone number provided for the hearing and did not participate in the hearing. The appellant called at 11:25 a.m. after the hearing record was closed.

ISSUES:

Should the hearing record be reopened?

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the appellant not participating in the hearing?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The party was properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. The appellant failed to provide a telephone number at which he could be reached for the hearing. When the appellant called in after the record was closed, he stated that he did not provide a number because he did not read the hearing notice carefully, he had skimmed it. He also stated that he assumed the Appeals Bureau would call him.

The representative's decision concluded that the claimant was ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the ALJ may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party.

The statute further states that if a party makes a timely request to vacate the decision and shows good cause for failing to appear, the ALJ shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the Appeals Bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the ALJ may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing and shows good cause for reopening the hearing. The rule further states that failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing is not good cause for reopening the record. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7)c.

The appellant appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The appellant acknowledged that he had not read the entire notice and assumed that the Appeals Bureau would initiate the telephone contact even without a response to the hearing notice. He has not established a good-cause reason for failing to respond to the hearing notice instructions and the record shall not be reopened. The appellant has therefore defaulted on his appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in full force and effect.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated December 11, 2014 (reference 01) is affirmed. The record shall not be reopened. The decision denying benefits remains in effect.

Kristin A. Collinson
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

kac/can