

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

NATHANIEL J CUNNINGHAM
Claimant

BRAET'S SERVICE LLC
Employer

APPEAL 18A-UI-08496-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**OC: 12/17/17
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Iowa Code §96.6(2) - Timeliness of Protest
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from the January 30, 2018, (reference 01) decision that allowed benefits and found the protest untimely. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on August 27, 2018. The claimant did not participate. The employer did participate through Dirk Braet, Owner. Official notice was taken of agency records. .

ISSUES:

Did the employer file a timely appeal?
Did the employer file a timely notice of protest?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant's notice of claim was mailed to employer's address of record on December 19, 2017. The employer chose not to open his mail as he always lets his accountant deal with the paperwork. The notice of claim was received by the employer within ten days but was not opened by them until January 12, 2018. The notice of claim contains a warning that any protest must be postmarked, faxed or returned not later than December 29, 2017. Employer did not file a protest until January 12, 2018, which is after the ten-day period had expired. No good cause reason has been established for the delay.

The decision finding the employer's notice of protest untimely was mailed to the employer's last known address of record on January 30, 2018. The employer did receive the decision within ten days. The employer chose not to file an appeal at that time. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by February 9, 2018. The appeal was not filed until August 8, 2018, which is after the date noticed on the allowance decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes employer's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion.

Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The January 30, 2018, (reference 01), decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect. The employer has not filed a timely protest.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/rvs