

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

BRENDA J ECHOLS
Claimant

APPEAL 21A-UI-04142-LJ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT**

OC: 03/29/20
Claimant: Appellant (6)

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On January 28, 2021, claimant Brenda J. Echols filed an appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated January 20, 2021, (reference 02) that determined claimant was overpaid regular unemployment insurance benefits. Notice of hearing was mailed to the party's last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 20, 2021. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system the same day shows the claimant/appellant did not register a telephone number at which to be reached for the hearing and no hearing was held.

ISSUE:

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 on this appeal. The appellant did not register a telephone number at which to be reached and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The representative's decision concluded claimant has been overpaid \$1,964.00 in regular unemployment insurance benefits for the twelve-week period ending July 4, 2020, as a result of a disqualification decision.

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 judge 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 judge shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

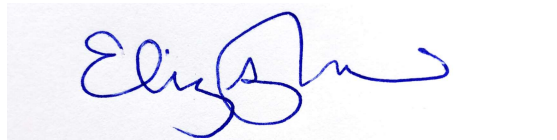
Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the Appeals Bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing *by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided*, the judge 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. (Emphasis added.)

The appellant appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The appellant has therefore defaulted on the appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in force and effect.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, a request to reopen the record must be made to the administrative law judge within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the end of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the claimant/appellant from participating in the hearing at the scheduled time.

DECISION:

The appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed. The unemployment insurance decision dated January 20, 2021; (reference 02) finding claimant was overpaid remains in effect.



Elizabeth A. Johnson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515)478-3528

March 23, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

lj/kmj