

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

STACI M LEE
Claimant

FAIRFIELD HOTEL AND SUITES LLC
Employer

APPEAL 19A-UI-04445-SC-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/03/19
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Protest

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On May 30, 2019, Fairfield Hotel and Suites, LLC (employer) filed an appeal from the May 21, 2019, reference 06, unemployment insurance decision that found the protest untimely and allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on June 26, 2019. Staci M. Lee (claimant) did not respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. The employer participated through General Manager Kevin Johnson.

ISSUE:

Is the employer's protest timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant separated from employment on September 1, 2018 and filed a claim for benefits effective March 3, 2019. The notice of claim was mailed to the employer's address of record on March 7, 2019 and was received by employer within ten days. The notice of claim contains a warning that the employer protest response is due ten days from the initial notice date and gave a response deadline of March 18. The employer did not file a protest response until May 20, which is after the ten-day period had expired, because General Manager Kevin Johnson was traveling and attending training when he received the notice of claim on March 11. He mistakenly failed to respond to the notice of claim at that time.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that employer has failed to file protest response within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.

b. The division shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.

c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the department after considering the circumstances in the case.

d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

Another portion of this same Code section dealing with timeliness of an appeal from a representative's decision states that such an appeal must be filed within ten days after notification of that decision was mailed. In addressing an issue of timeliness of an appeal under that portion of this Code section, the Iowa Supreme Court held that this statute prescribing the time for notice of appeal clearly limits the time to do so, and that compliance with the appeal notice provision is mandatory and jurisdictional. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

The administrative law judge considers the reasoning and holding of that court in that decision to be controlling on this portion of that same Iowa Code section which deals with a time limit in which to file a protest after notification of the filing of the claim has been mailed. The employer's protest was filed after the deadline. The employer has not established that the delay was due to any agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). As the employer has failed to timely protest, the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's separation from employment. See, *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

DECISION:

The May 21, 2019, reference 06, unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The employer failed to file a timely protest response, and the decision of the representative shall stand and remain in full force and effect.

Stephanie R. Callahan
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

src/scn