

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**SHERRI A OLIVAS**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-06768-SWT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**TOYOTA MOTOR CREDIT CORP**  
Employer

**OC: 06/17/07 R: 03  
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge  
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated July 6, 2007, reference 01, that concluded the claimant's discharge was not for work-connected misconduct. A telephone hearing was held on July 27, 2007. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. The claimant participated in the hearing. Jodie Driscoll participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer. Exhibits One and Two were admitted into evidence at the hearing.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for work-connected misconduct?

Was the claimant overpaid unemployment insurance benefits?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The claimant worked full time for the employer as an administrative specialist from August 16, 1999, to June 18, 2007. She was informed and understood that under the employer's work rules, e-mail was to be used for business purposes and excessive personal use would result in discipline. Furthermore, sending e-mails containing offensive material, such as images, messages, or jokes of a sexual nature, was prohibited.

During the review of the claimant's e-mail usage conducted in June 2007, the employer found more than 200 e-mail messages that were personal in nature from April through June 2007. They included messages with offensive materials, including images and jokes containing sexual content. The claimant knew that her e-mail usage violated the employer's electronic communications policy.

On June 18, 2007, the employer discharged the claimant for willful violation of the employer's electronic communications policy due to her excessive personal e-mails and sending offensive materials from her work computer.

The claimant filed for and received a total of \$758.00 in unemployment insurance benefits for the weeks between June 17 and July 7, 2007.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The issue in this case is whether the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law.

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(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

The claimant's violation of a known work rule was a willful and material breach of the duties and obligations to the employer and a substantial disregard of the standards of behavior the employer had the right to expect of the claimant. The evidence fails to establish that the employer condoned or tolerated violation of the employer's electronic communications policy. Work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has been established in this case.

The next issue in this case is whether the claimant was overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

As a result of this decision, the claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits and was overpaid \$758.00 in benefits for the weeks between June 17 and July 7, 2007.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated July 6, 2007, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits until she has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant was overpaid \$758.00 in unemployment insurance benefits, which must be repaid.

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Steven A. Wise  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

saw/kjw