

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**MARTIN A MERICAL**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 18A-UI-03831-JP-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 12/03/17  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from the March 13, 2018, (reference 09) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits as of March 11, 2018. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on April 19, 2018. Claimant participated. Official notice was taken of the administrative record with no objection.

**ISSUE:**

Is the appeal timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: An ineligibility unemployment insurance decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on March 13, 2018. Claimant received the decision, but he is not sure when he received it. Claimant has been at the address of record for approximately five years. Claimant testified he only picks up his mail every three or four days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by March 23, 2018. The appeal was not filed until March 26, 2018, which is after the date noticed on the unemployment insurance decision. Claimant testified he did not realize he had to file a written appeal. Claimant had contacted Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), but he did not tell IWD he wanted to file an appeal.

Claimant went on vacation from February 15, 2018 through March 8, 2018. When claimant returned from vacation, he had multiple letters or decisions from IWD. Claimant also had a missed call from IWD while he was on vacation. When claimant initially received the decisions, he saw that it said unemployment insurance benefits and thought that it was about insurance benefits through unemployment so he disregarded them at first.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes claimant'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. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

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 unemployment insurance 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. Claimant testified that when he returned from his vacation, he had multiple letters waiting for him. Claimant further testified he initially thought the letters were regarding insurance benefits

through unemployment so he disregarded them at first. The decision clearly warned claimant that the “decision becomes final” unless an appeal is filed by March 23, 2018. The decision also stated that the appeal information was on the back of the decision. On the back of the decision, it clearly stated “You may file an online appeal or submit a written appeal by mail or fax.” The decision gave the fax number, e-mail address, and mailing address for the Appeals Bureau. It is also noted that claimant had already received two prior decisions (dated March 6, 2018 (reference 05) and March 12, 2018 (reference 07)) that had denied him benefits, but he still waited until March 26, 2018 to appeal any of these adverse decisions. Claimant has failed to show a good cause reason for waiting until March 26, 2018 to file an appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to follow the clear written instructions 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 Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(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. Iowa Dep’t of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep’t of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The March 13, 2018, (reference 09) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

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Jeremy Peterson  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

jp/rvs