

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

TERRANCE T LOVELADY
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-03663-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CASEY'S MARKETING COMPANY
Employer

OC: 02/17/13
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Terrance Lovelady appealed from an unemployment insurance decision dated March 15, 2013, reference 03, that denied benefits based on an agency conclusion that he had voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer on April 23, 2012 by becoming incarcerated. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on May 1, 2013. Mr. Lovelady participated and presented additional testimony through Amber Lovelady. The employer did not respond to the hearing notice instructions to provide a telephone number for the hearing and did not participate. Department Exhibits D-1 through D-4 were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether there is good cause to treat Mr. Lovelady's late appeal from the March 15, 2013, reference 03, decision as a timely appeal.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On March 14, 2013, Mr. Lovelady participated in a fact-finding interview in reference to his separation from Casey's Marketing Company. On March 15, 2013, Workforce Development mailed a copy of the March 15, 2013, reference 03, decision to Mr. Lovelady's last known address of record in Corydon. Mr. Lovelady received the decision on or before March 18, 2013. The decision contained a warning that an appeal from the decision had to be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section at Iowa Workforce Development no later than March 25, 2013. The decision also contained clear and concise instructions on the steps to take to file an appeal. Mr. Lovelady is a high school graduate. Mr. Lovelady has a reading disability. At all relevant times, Mr. Lovelady had the assistance of his spouse, who does not have a reading disability. On March 18, 2013, Mr. Lovelady telephoned a local Workforce Development office for further instruction on how to file an appeal and was given a toll-free number he could call for further information. On March 26, 2013, Mr. Lovelady and his spouse drafted Mr. Lovelady's appeal letter. They then mailed the appeal letter. The appeal letter bears a March 27, 2013, Des Moines postmark. The Appeals Section received the appeal on March 28, 2013.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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, subsection 10, 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-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency 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).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b).

The appeal in question was filed on March 27, 2013, the postmark date on the envelope in which the appeal was submitted.

The evidence in the record establishes 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 weight of the evidence indicates that Mr. Lovelady received the decision in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. The evidence indicates that the decision carried clear and concise instructions on how to file an appeal. The evidence indicates that there was no need for further information on how to file an appeal. The evidence indicates that if Mr. Lovelady had the assistance of his literate spouse and had the ability to file an appeal by the appeal deadline. The evidence indicates that Mr. Lovelady waited until after the appeal deadline to file his 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 Workforce Development error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. See 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 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 Agency representative's March 15, 2013, reference 03, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative that disqualified the claimant for benefits in connection with his April 23, 2012 separation from Casey's Marketing Company remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/css