

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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CARE INITIATIVES  
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Appeal Number: 05A-UI-06756-H2T  
OC: 05-29-05 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (1)

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the June 21, 2005, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on July 25, 2005. The claimant did participate. The employer did participate through Kellie Jimerson, Administrator, and was represented by Suzanna Ettrich of Johnson & Associates.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a Medicare plan coordinator full time beginning February 8, 2005 through May 27, 2005, when she was discharged.

At hearing the employer alleged that the claimant was discharged because she falsified a form that was used to track residents falls. At the time of her discharge the claimant was only told that she was being discharged for being rude to staff. The claimant was never told, until the time she applied for unemployment insurance benefits, that she had been discharged for falsification of documents. Since the employer never told the claimant she was being discharged for falsification, nor gave the claimant an opportunity to explain her side of the story with regard to how the fall forms were filled out, the employer has not established falsification of forms as misconduct.

Additionally, the employer has not established that the claimant was rude or spoke to others in a derogatory or demeaning manner.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The employer discharged the claimant and has the burden of proof to show misconduct. Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). Poor work performance is not misconduct in the absence of evidence of intent. Miller v. Employment Appeal Board, 423 N.W.2d 211 (Iowa App. 1988).

The claimant was entitled to fair warning that the employer was no longer going to tolerate her performance and conduct. Without fair warning the claimant had no way of knowing that there were changes she needed to make in order to preserve his employment. At hearing the employer relied upon the claimant's alleged falsification of documents as the reason for her discharge. However, the employer admits that the claimant was never told at the time of her discharge that she was being discharged for falsifying documents. The claimant was never given an opportunity by the employer to explain herself or her actions. The employer's allegations at hearing that the claimant was rude to coworkers has not been established. The employer's evidence does not establish that the claimant deliberately and intentionally acted in a manner she knew to be contrary to the employer's interests or standards. There was no wanton or willful disregard of the employer's standards. In short, substantial misconduct has not been established by the evidence. While the employer may have had good cause to discharge, conduct which might warrant a discharge from employment will not necessarily sustain a disqualification from job insurance benefits. Budding v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 337 N.W.2d 219 (Iowa App. 1983). Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

#### DECISION:

The June 21, 2005, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

tkh/kjw