

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

JUAN RODRIGUEZ  
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PO BOX 393  
STORM LAKE IA 50588

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC  
C/O TALX UC EXPRESS  
PO BOX 283  
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-11705-HT  
OC: 10/03/04 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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  
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer, Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc. (Tyson), filed an appeal from a decision dated October 21, 2004, reference 01. The decision allowed benefits to the claimant, Juan Rodriguez. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on November 29, 2004. The claimant participated on his own behalf and Rosemary Paramo-Ricoy acted as interpreter. The employer participated by Human Resources Manager Jim Petzoldt. Exhibit One was admitted into the record.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony of the witnesses and having examined all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Juan Rodriguez was employed by Tyson from September 2, 2003 until September 28, 2004. He was a full-time production worker on the day shift. At the time he was hired the claimant attended an orientation session which included written material. Both the verbal and written part of the orientation were given in English and in Spanish. One of the policies reviewed with the new employees was the attendance rules. Employees who accumulate 14 points in a rolling 12-month period are subject to discharge.

The claimant received written warnings regarding his attendance on December 13, 2003, and January 11 and 19, 2004. At the time of the final warning he had accumulated 11 points. After that warning he was absent on September 13, 2004, due to illness which he properly reported. On September 25, 2004, he was no-call/no-show to work. The night before he had trouble sleeping and had taken a double dose of Nyquil cold medication. He awoke the next morning dizzy and disoriented and decided not to go to work, but he did not call in because he did not have a telephone and did not want to go out and look for a pay phone. When he returned to work he was suspended pending a review of his attendance and notified on September 28, 2004, he was discharged for excessive absenteeism.

Juan Rodriguez has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of October 3, 2004.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant is disqualified. The judge concludes he is.

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, (7) provide:

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).

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

The claimant had been advised his job was in jeopardy as a result of his absenteeism. He had received the policy as well as the progressive disciplinary action for his prior absences. The final absence was due to oversleeping, which in turn was due to over-medicating himself on over the counter cold medication. He also knowingly failed to call in his absence as required because he did not want to go out looking for a pay phone. The final incident was not properly reported and due to purely personal considerations, which is not an excused absence under Higgins v. IDJS, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984). The claimant is disqualified.

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.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits to which he is not entitled. These must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of October 21, 2004, reference 01, is reversed. Juan Rodriguez is disqualified and benefits are withheld until he has earned ten times his weekly benefit amount provided he is otherwise eligible. He is overpaid in the amount of \$2,457.00.

bgh/tjc