

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

DONALD L CHINN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-10998-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

DIXON CONSTRUCTION COMPANY INC
Employer

OC: 06/13/10
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Donald Chinn (claimant) appealed a representative's July 30, 2010 decision (reference 01) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work with Dixon Construction Company (employer) for causing dissention among other employees. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for September 21, 2010. The claimant was represented by Mary Hamilton, Attorney at Law, and participated personally. The employer participated by Dave Dixon, Owner, and Stan Huffman, Project Foreman.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on May 6, 2008, as a full-time laborer. The employer has a handbook but the claimant did not recall having received a copy. The employer did not issue the claimant any warnings during his employment. He was never late for work because the employer always gave him a ride to and from work.

The claimant requested and was granted a few hours of leave on June 25, 2010. The claimant went fishing with his brother in South Dakota. He encountered tornados and bad storms, and called the employer on June 27, 2010. He informed the employer that he would not need a ride on June 28, 2010, because he would be late coming to work due to the weather. The employer told the claimant that it was not a problem.

On June 28, 2010, the claimant arrived home at 11:30 a.m. and went straight to the job site. The employer told the claimant that he did not want any excuses and the claimant was terminated.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for misconduct.

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 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). An employer may discharge an employee for any number of reasons or no reason at all, but if it fails to meet its burden of proof to establish job related misconduct as the reason for the separation, employer incurs potential liability for unemployment insurance benefits related to that separation. Inasmuch as employer had not previously warned claimant about any of the issues leading to the separation, it has not met the burden of proof to establish that claimant acted deliberately or negligently in violation of company policy, procedure, or prior warning. If an employer expects an employee to conform to certain expectations or face discharge, appropriate (preferably written), detailed, and reasonable notice should be given. The employer did provide sufficient evidence to meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's July 30, 2010 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The employer has not met its proof to establish job-related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/css