

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SANDRA D HIXSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-05485-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

GRINNELL REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
Employer

OC: 03/08/09
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Grinnell Regional Medical Center (employer) appealed a representative's March 30, 2009 decision (reference 01) that concluded Sandra Hixson (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for May 5, 2009. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Deb Nowachek, Human Resources Manager; Beth Rindels, Assistant Vice President; Beth Kirton, Nurse Manager; and David Ness, Vice President of Operations. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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 September 16, 2002, as a full-time patient care technician. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on September 16, 2002. The claimant did not receive any warnings until her last year of employment. The employer issued the claimant warnings for inappropriate behavior on April 23, May 7, June 5, July 10, 2008, and January 8, 2009. The claimant thought the employer was using the warnings to reduce its workforce.

On March 8, 2009, a patient complained about the claimant. The claimant could not think of anything she did wrong in the patient's care. The employer terminated her on March 10, 2009.

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). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). The employer did not provide any evidence of job-related misconduct at the hearing. None of the employer's witnesses had ever seen the claimant do anything wrong. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's March 30, 2009 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. 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