

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

JOHNNY R REIMERS
Claimant

YMCA OF THE CEDAR RAPIDS METRO
Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-00139-CL-T
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION

OC: 12/08/19
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Protest

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On January 3, 2020, the employer filed an appeal from the December 31, 2019, (reference 01) decision that found the protest untimely and allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on January 27, 2020. The claimant participated. The employer participated by human resources director Jan Keene. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record, including the Notice of Claim and protest.

ISSUE:

Is the employer's protest timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On December 12, 2019, Iowa Workforce Development mailed a notice of claim to employer's address of record. There is no reason to believe employer did not receive the notice of claim within ten days. However, the notice of claim was not immediately reviewed as the person who handles unemployment paperwork for employer, Jan Keene, was out of the office for vacation and the holidays until December 27, 2019. Employer did not assign anyone to review the mail directed to Keene while she was out. When Keene returned she reviewed the notice of claim. The notice of claim contains a warning that any protest must be postmarked, faxed or returned not later than ten days from the initial mailing date. The employer did not file a protest until December 27, 2019, which is after the ten-day period had expired.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes that employer has failed to protest within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.8(2) provides:

Notifying employing units of claims filed, requests for wage and separation information, and decisions made.

24.8(2) Responding by employing units to a notice of the filing of an initial claim or a request for wage and separation information and protesting the payment of benefits.

a. The employing unit which receives a Form 65-5317, Notice of Claim, or Form 68-0221, Request for Wage and Separation Information, must, within ten days of the date of the notice or request, submit to the department wage or separation information that affects the individual's rights to benefits, including any facts which disclose that the individual separated from employment voluntarily and without good cause attributable to the employer or was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment.

b. The employing unit may protest the payment of benefits if the protest is postmarked within ten days of the date of the notice of the filing of an initial claim. In the event that the tenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If the employing unit has filed a timely report of facts that might adversely affect the individual's benefit rights, the report shall be considered as a protest to the payment of benefits.

c. If the employing unit protests that the individual was not an employee and it is subsequently determined that the individual's name was changed, the employing unit shall be deemed to have not been properly notified and the employing unit shall again be provided the opportunity to respond to the notice of the filing of the initial claim.

d. The employing unit has the option of notifying the department under conditions which, in the opinion of the employing unit, may disqualify an individual from receiving benefits. The notification may be submitted electronically.

(1) The Notice of Separation, Form 60-0154, must be postmarked or received before or within ten days of the date that the Notice of Claim, Form 65-5317, was mailed to the employer. In the event that the tenth day falls on Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If a claim for unemployment insurance benefits has not been filed, the Notice of Separation may be accepted at any time.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

24.35(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

- a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.
- b. The division shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.
- c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case.
- d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

In this case, employer failed to file a timely protest because its human resources director was out of the office when it received the notice of claim. Employer's choice to hold the mail while the business operations continued during the human resources director's absence was a business decision. The delay was not due to any *Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service* pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-4.35(2). Employer has a reasonable amount of time to file a protest. The administrative law judge further concludes that the employer has failed to timely protest pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's termination of employment. See, *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

DECISION:

The December 31, 2019, (reference 01) decision is affirmed. Employer has failed to file a timely protest, and the decision of the representative shall stand and remain in full force and effect.



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January 31, 2020
Decision Dated and Mailed

cal/scn