

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

**JAMES F COLLINS**  
Claimant

**PERISHABLE DISTRIBUTORS OF IA LTD**  
Employer

**APPEAL 22A-UI-17590-LJ-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 08/28/22**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1) – Able and Available/Illness

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On September 30, 2022, claimant James F. Collins filed an appeal from the September 22, 2022 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based on a determination that claimant was not able to work due to illness. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephonic hearing was held at 2:00 p.m. on Monday, October 24, 2022. The claimant, James F. Collins, participated. The employer, Perishable Distributors of Iowa, Ltd., participated through Janel Mortale, Director of Human Resources. No exhibits were offered or admitted into the record. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

**ISSUE:**

Effective August 28, 2022, was the claimant able to work and available for work?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant began working for Perishable Distributors of Iowa on April 9, 2012. He remains employed with the employer as a full-time truck driver. Claimant opened his claim with an effective date of August 28, 2022, due to testing positive for COVID-19.

Claimant began experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 on August 27, 2022. The following day, he took a COVID-19 test and tested positive. Claimant contacted his supervisor, who told him to stay home and wait to hear from the safety manager, Gary. The next day, Gary contacted him and told him to remain at home for the remainder of his workweek and to plan to return the following Sunday, September 4. Claimant remained off work for the remainder of his standard workweek, and he returned as scheduled on September 4. The employer continued to operate in claimant's absence.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant was not able to work due to illness.

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37", paragraph "b", subparagraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.1A, subsection 37, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2) provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(2) Available for work. The availability requirement is satisfied when an individual is willing, able, and ready to accept suitable work which the individual does not have good cause to refuse, that is, the individual is genuinely attached to the labor market. Since, under unemployment insurance laws, it is the availability of an individual that is required to be tested, the labor market must be described in terms of the individual. A labor market for an individual means a market for the type of service which the individual offers in the geographical area in which the individual offers the service. Market in that sense does not mean that job vacancies must exist; the purpose of unemployment insurance is to compensate for lack of job vacancies. It means only that the type of services which an individual is offering is generally performed in the geographical area in which the individual is offering the services.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(1) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(1) An individual who is ill and presently not able to perform work due to illness.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.2(1)(g) provides in relevant part:

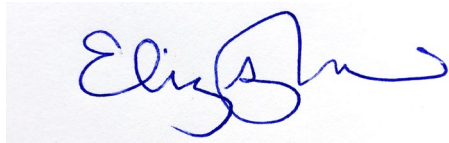
Section 96.6 of the employment security law of Iowa states that claims for benefits shall be made in accordance with such rules as the department prescribes. The department of workforce development accordingly prescribes: ...

g. No benefit payment shall be allowed until the individual claiming benefits has completed a continued claim online or as otherwise directed by the department.

For an unemployed individual to be eligible to receive benefits, she must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work as required by the unemployment insurance law. Iowa Code § 96.4(3). The burden is on the claimant to establish that she is able and available for work within the meaning of the statute. Iowa Code § 96.6(2); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22. In this case, the claimant was not able to report to work and perform his job for the one week ending September 3, 2022, due to the COVID-19 virus. Moreover, claimant recorded no weekly continued claim for benefits for the week ending September 3, 2022, to indicate he was unemployed, able and available for work, and seeking work that week. Accordingly, benefits for that week are denied.

**DECISION:**

The September 22, 2022 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant was not able to work due to illness, and benefits must be denied.



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Elizabeth A. Johnson  
Administrative Law Judge

October 26, 2022  
Decision Dated and Mailed

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**APPEAL RIGHTS.** If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
Online: [eab.iowa.gov](http://eab.iowa.gov)**

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.

**AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL 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.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> or by contacting the District Court Clerk of Court <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

**Note to Parties:** YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or 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.

**Note to Claimant:** It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

**SERVICE INFORMATION:**

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

**DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN.** Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4th Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
En línea: [eab.iowa.gov](http://eab.iowa.gov)**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

**UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:**

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que se encuentra en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> o comunicándose con el Tribunal de Distrito Secretario del tribunal <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

**Nota para las partes:** USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

**Nota para el reclamante:** es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

**SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:**

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.