

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

LAURA J DANNER
PO BOX 374
GLIDDEN IA 51443

PELLA CORPORATION
c/o SHEAKLEY UNISERVICE INC
PO BOX 1160
COLUMBUS OH 43216-1160

JOHN LEPLEY
ATTORNEY AT LAW
1200 VALLEY WEST DR
STE 304-08
WEST DES MOINES IA 50266

Appeal Number: 05A-UI-07463-H2T
OC: 06-12-05 R: 01
Claimant: Appellant (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, 4th 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.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the July 13, 2005, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on August 8, 2005. The claimant did participate and was represented by John Lepley, Attorney at Law. The employer did not participate. Claimant's Exhibit A was received.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as an assembler full time beginning June 30, 1997 through May 5, 2005, when she was discharged. The claimant sustained a work related injury December 2003 to her back. The claimant currently has work restrictions that our set out in Claimant's Exhibit A

and severely limit her abilities to lift, squat, crawl or kneel. The claimant was scheduled to work on an assembly line on May 5, 2005 in an area where she had not worked before. The work she performed increased and aggravated her back injury and pain. The claimant did not refuse to work but did tell the employer that some of the work she was required to perform did aggravate and hurt her back. The claimant did not quit her job; the employer did not offer the claimant work that complied with her work restrictions. It was not the claimant's decision not to work on May 5, 2005, it was Lee Stork's decision to send her home based on his opinion that the work she was being required to perform was aggravating her back injury. The claimant took no action to indicate to the employer that she wanted to quit her job.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

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).

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). The employer discharged the claimant and has the burden of proof to show misconduct. Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). Poor work performance is not misconduct in the absence of evidence of intent. Miller v. Employment Appeal Board, 423 N.W.2d 211 (Iowa App. 1988).

The employer's evidence does not establish that the claimant deliberately and intentionally acted in a manner she knew to be contrary to the employer's interests or standards. There was no wanton or willful disregard of the employer's standards. In short, substantial misconduct has not been established by the evidence. The employer has not established any misconduct on the part of the claimant. The claimant's inability to work outside or beyond her work restrictions is not misconduct. The claimant is currently able to and available to work physically within her work restrictions.

DECISION:

The July 13, 2005, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

tkh/kjw