

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

SULEY L TORRES
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 20A-UI-13923-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

OC: 04/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code Section 95.4(3) – Able & Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed a late appeal from the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision that denied benefits effective April 19, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was unavailable for work. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on January 5, 2021. Claimant participated. The employer did not provide a telephone number for the hearing and did not participate. The hearing in this matter was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Numbers 20A-UI-13924-JTT and 20A-UI-13925-JTT. Claimant Exhibits 1 through 8 were received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the following agency administrative records: KCCO, DBRO, KPYX, NMRO, KFFV and the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision. A Spanish-English interpreter assisted with the appeal hearing.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant is a Spanish-speaking person who can read and understand some English.

On June 15, 2020, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision to the claimant at her last-known address of record. The decision denied benefits effective April 19, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was unavailable for work. The decision stated that it would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by June 25, 2020 or received by the Appeal Section by that date. The claimant received the decision in a timely manner prior to the appeal deadline. The claimant noted that the decision denied benefits. The claimant did not look at the back of the decision. The back of the decision included information in English and in Spanish. That information included information regarding the deadline for appeal and clear and concise instructions for filing an appeal. The claimant did not take any steps to file the appeal by the appeal deadline or at any point prior to November 2, 2020.

On October 27, 2020, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the claimant two overpayment decisions that were based on the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. The reference 02 decision held the claimant was overpaid \$1,026.00 in regular benefits. The reference 03 decision held that the claimant was overpaid \$3,600.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC).

On November 2, 2020, the claimant drafted her appeal with the assistance of a notary. The claimant attached the two overpayment decisions, but did not attach or reference the June 15, 2020, reference 01, disqualification decision. On November 3, 2020, the claimant electronically submitted her appeal. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on November 3, 2020.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

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. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was

received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(a). See also *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(b).

The evidence in the record establishes that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The evidenced in the record establishes that the appeal from the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision was untimely. The claimant received the decision in a timely manner, had a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal by the June 25, 2020 appeal deadline, but elected not to file an appeal until November 3, 2020 after she received the overpayment decisions. Because the late filing of the appeal was attributable to the claimant, and not attributable to Iowa Workforce Development or to the United States Postal Service, there is not good cause to treat the late appeal as a timely appeal. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2). Because the appeal was untimely, administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The claimant appeal from the June 15, 2020, reference 01, decision was untimely. The decision that denied benefits effective April 19, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was unavailable for work, remains in effect.



James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

February 04, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/ol

NOTE TO CLAIMANT:

- This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision.
- If you do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits under state law and are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** For more information on how to apply for PUA, go to <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. **If you do not apply for and are not approved for PUA, you may be required to repay the benefits you have received.**