

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**RANDI L SHELDON**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-05396-LT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**UNITED STATES CELLULAR  
CORPORATION**  
Employer

**OC: 04/22/07 R: 03  
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed a timely appeal from the May 14, 2007, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a telephone conference hearing was held on June 12, 2007. Claimant participated. Employer participated through Angie Bailey and Nicole Cochran. Employer's Exhibit 1 was received.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether claimant was discharged for reasons related to job misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having heard the testimony and having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed as a full time customer service representative (CSR) from June 26, 2006 until April 6, 2007, when she was discharged. On February 28, 2007, claimant released three yet unbilled dialed phone numbers over the phone to a customer who called asking for the information. Claimant's computer account notes indicate she verified the customer social security number and zip code, but the customer had only the area code and date and approximate time range of the calls. The policy (Employer's Exhibit 1, pages 5 through 8, 11 and 12) prohibit release of call information that has not yet been billed in an attempt to protect customer identity and privacy against "pretexters" attempts to obtain private information of customers. The only way unbilled call information can be released is when the bill is printed and mailed to the customer or by subpoena. Claimant admitted the conduct and said she did not know why she did so and must have forgotten about the policy. Employer discovered the issue when the customer called back on April 5 and escalated because a different CSR would not release the information again. On September 7, 2006, employer warned claimant about failing to verify the account holder's name, address, or account information in order to release information and maintain privacy.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of April 22, 2007.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related 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.

Claimant's failure to maintain customer account privacy in violation of employer policy after having been warned, is evidence of misconduct sufficient to deny benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment

compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

**DECISION:**

The May 14, 2007, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,058.00.

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Dévon M. Lewis  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

dml/kjw