

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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

**RUDELL M SADIE**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 19A-UI-01334-JE-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SWIFT PORK COMPANY**  
Employer

**OC: 01/13/19**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed a timely appeal from the February 5, 2019, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on March 1, 2019. The claimant participated in the hearing. Vicky Cervantes, Human Resources Manager, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time general laborer for Swift Pork Company from October 16, 2017 to January 10, 2019. He was discharged for attendance issues.

The employer's attendance policy allows employees to accumulate nine points before termination occurs. The claimant had 25 points as of November 27, 2018. The employer issued the claimant a last chance agreement regarding his attendance November 28, 2018. The warning stated the claimant could not have any unexcused absences, including those properly reported due to illness, until March 1, 2019. The claimant was one minute tardy December 3, 2018, and received one-half point and was a no-call/no-show December 29, 2018 and January 8, 2019, and received two points for each of those absences. The claimant was absent due to properly reported illness January 9, 2019, and the employer terminated his employment January 10, 2019.

**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, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

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 disqualification shall continue 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

Excessive absences are not considered misconduct unless unexcused. Absences due to properly reported illness cannot constitute job misconduct since they are not volitional. *Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The standard in attendance cases is whether the claimant had an excessive unexcused absenteeism record. (Emphasis added).

Because the final absence was related to properly reported illness, no final or current incident of unexcused absenteeism has been established. Therefore, benefits must be allowed.

**DECISION:**

The February 5, 2019, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

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Julie Elder  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

je/scn