

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**JESUS RUIZ**  
Claimant

**C & S QUALITY CONSTRUCTION LLC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 19A-UI-00403-NM-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 11/25/18  
Claimant: Appellant (1R)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from the December 31, 2018, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits, effective December 14, 2018, based upon a determination that he refused a suitable offer of work. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on January 30, 2019. The claimant participated and testified with the assistance of a Spanish interpreter from CTS Language Link. Claimant's wife, Kenya Herrera, was also present, but did not testify. The employer participated through owner Shanuna Ruhlend. Department's Exhibit D-1 was received.

**ISSUE:**

Is the claimant's appeal timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A disqualifying unemployment insurance decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on December 31, 2018. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by January 10, 2019. Claimant left Iowa to visit Mexico for an extended period on time beginning December 9, 2018. Claimant is still in Mexico. Claimant did not provide an updated address where he is staying while in Mexico and has not had his mail forwarded. Claimant did arrange for someone to periodically check his mail. When claimant learned of the disqualifying decision he filed his appeal on January 15, 2019.

At the time of the hearing information was provided indicating there is a dispute between claimant and the employer as to whether claimant was on a voluntary leave of absence or temporarily laid off work beginning November 25, 2018.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code § 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 § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 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 § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 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 § 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the 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. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

The record in this case shows 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

Claimant knew he would not be at his regular mailing address for an extended period of time and that he had an unemployment insurance claim on file. Claimant elected to have someone check his mail periodically, rather than provide IWD with a temporary address or have it forwarded to him in Mexico. The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The December 31, 2018, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

**REMAND:**

The issues of whether claimant was temporarily laid off and able to and available for work effective November 25, 2018 is remanded to the benefits bureau of Iowa Workforce Development for initial investigation and determination.

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Nicole Merrill  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

nm/rvs