

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

STACEY G ROETHLER

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-06716-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

FIRST RESOURCES CORPORATION

Employer

OC: 04/04/10

Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

First Resources Corporation (employer) appealed a representative's April 28, 2010 decision (reference 01) that concluded Stacey Roethler (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for June 23, 2010. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Lori Ledger, Director of Residential Program, and Chris Ridenour. The claimant offered and Exhibits A, B, and C were received into evidence. The employer offered and Exhibits One and Two were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on November 26, 2001, as a full-time program manager. The employer issued the claimant written warnings on March 25 and September 23, 2009, for poor performance. The claimant suffered from depression and anxiety. She requested and was granted Family Medical Leave (FMLA) from October through December 17, 2009. The claimant requested additional time off based on a doctor's note indicating she should not return to work until December 31, 2009, because her medication was still being adjusted. The employer denied the claimant's request and put her back to work on December 21, 2009.

The employer told the claimant that a lot of co-workers were upset with the claimant for being absent from work. The claimant found that her co-workers would not look at her or talk to her. The employer thought she was not paying attention or retaining information from meetings. This was a result of the medication adjustment. On March 31, 2010, the employer terminated the claimant for poor performance. The employer believed the claimant was not able to retain information or follow through with directions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for 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.

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). Misconduct connotes volition. A failure in job performance which results from inability or incapacity is not volitional and therefore not misconduct. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Services, 275 N.W.2d 445 (Iowa 1979). 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 discharged the claimant for poor work performance and has the burden of proof to show evidence of intent. The employer did not provide any evidence of intent at the hearing. The claimant's poor work performance was a result of her medical condition. Consequently the employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's April 28, 2010 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The employer has not met its proof to establish job related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs