

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**CRUZ MATA**  
Claimant

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT**

**APPEAL NO: 22A-UI-00997-CS-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 11/17/19  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment  
PL116-136, Sec. 2104 – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On December 1, 2021, the claimant filed an appeal from the August 24, 2021, (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision that concluded he was overpaid \$5,400.00 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits. After proper notice, a telephone hearing was conducted on February 2, 2022. Appeal numbers 22A-UI-00994-CS-T, 22A-UI-00995-CS-T, 22A-UI-00996-CS-T and 22A-UI-00998-CS-T were heard together and created one record. Claimant participated at the hearing through a CTS Language Link Spanish Interpreter, Inaky (Identification No. 13766). Official notice of the administrative records was taken.

**ISSUE:**

Is claimant's appeal timely?

Is the claimant overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A FPUC overpayment decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on August 24, 2021. Claimant received the decision but did not open the letter. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by September 3, 2021. Claimant received a bill for the overpayment in December 2021 and that is what prompted him to appeal. The appeal was not filed until December 1, 2021.

The claimant filed a new claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of November 17, 2019.

The claimant received federal unemployment insurance benefits through Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC). Claimant received \$5,400.00 in federal benefits for the period of May 30, 2020 and July 25, 2020.

The unemployment insurance decision that disqualified the claimant from receiving unemployment insurance benefits has been affirmed in a decision of the administrative law judge in appeal 22A-UI-00995-CS-T.

### **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.

The claimant testified he received the overpayment decision. Claimant chose not to open the letter. An additional three months passed before claimant filed an appeal of this decision.

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 August 24, 2021, (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



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Carly Smith  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau

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February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022  
Decision Dated and Mailed

Cs/rs

*Note to Claimant:*

This decision determines you have been overpaid FPUC under the CARES Act. 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. Additionally, instructions for requesting a waiver of this overpayment can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/federal-unemployment-insurance-overpayment>. If this decision becomes final and you are not eligible for a waiver, you will have to repay the benefits you received.

You may find additional information about food, housing, and other resources at <https://covidrecoveryiowa.org/> or at <https://dhs.iowa.gov/node/3250>