

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**MICHELLE E RAY**  
Claimant

**PACIFICA HEALTH SERVICES LLC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-03139-CL-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 03/22/20**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Protest

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On April 14, 2020, the employer filed an appeal from the April 13, 2020, (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits based on an untimely protest. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on May 8, 2020. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated through director of human resources Matt Archibald. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

**ISSUE:**

Is the employer's protest timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Employer signed up to receive electronic notices of claim through the State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES). The notices are emailed to director of human resources Matt Archibald.

Claimant filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of March 22, 2020. On March 26, 2020, Iowa Workforce Development sent employer an email alert of the notice of claim in the SIDES system. The notice of claim states that a response is due by April 6, 2020. Employer received the email.

On April 9, 2020, employer filed its protest. Employer's protest was late due to the press of business. Employer operates two long-term care facilities and has been dealing within an outbreak of COVID 19 in one of its facilities since March 24, 2020. Archibald is the only employee in employer's human resource department and was hampered in collecting information to respond to the notices by the restriction of movement within employer's facilities. Additionally, employer was receiving approximately 50 notices of claim per month, when it previously received about two to four notices of claim per month.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes that employer has failed to protest within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.8(2) provides:

Notifying employing units of claims filed, requests for wage and separation information, and decisions made.

24.8(2) Responding by employing units to a notice of the filing of an initial claim or a request for wage and separation information and protesting the payment of benefits.

a. The employing unit which receives a Form 65-5317, Notice of Claim, or Form 68-0221, Request for Wage and Separation Information, must, within ten days of the date of the notice or request, submit to the department wage or separation information that affects the individual's rights to benefits, including any facts which disclose that the individual separated from employment voluntarily and without good cause attributable to the employer or was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment.

b. The employing unit may protest the payment of benefits if the protest is postmarked within ten days of the date of the notice of the filing of an initial claim. In the event that the tenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If the employing unit has filed a timely report of facts that might adversely affect the individual's benefit rights, the report shall be considered as a protest to the payment of benefits.

c. If the employing unit protests that the individual was not an employee and it is subsequently determined that the individual's name was changed, the employing unit shall be deemed to have not been properly notified and the employing unit shall again be provided the opportunity to respond to the notice of the filing of the initial claim.

d. The employing unit has the option of notifying the department under conditions which, in the opinion of the employing unit, may disqualify an individual from receiving benefits. The notification may be submitted electronically.

(1) The Notice of Separation, Form 60-0154, must be postmarked or received before or within ten days of the date that the Notice of Claim, Form 65-5317, was mailed to the employer. In the event that the tenth day falls on Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If a claim for unemployment insurance benefits has not been filed, the Notice of Separation may be accepted at any time.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

24.35(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.

b. The division shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.

c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case.

d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

In this case, the email alert of the notice of claim was sent to employer in a timely manner. No evidence indicates the email alert was not received in the inbox. The delay 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. 871-4.35(2). Employer had a reasonable amount of time to file a protest.

The administrative law judge certainly understands the overwhelming amount of unemployment claims that have been filed within the last two months and the additional workload that entails. However, the administrative law judge does not have authority to alter the statutory 10-day deadline to respond to the notice of claim. The employer's protest is considered untimely.

Because the protest is untimely, the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's termination of employment. See, *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

**DECISION:**

The April 13, 2020, (reference 03) decision is affirmed. Employer has failed to file a timely protest, and the decision of the representative shall stand and remain in full force and effect.



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Christine A. Louis  
Administrative Law Judge  
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May 13, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

cal/scn