

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

RHONDA S KONZ
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 06A-UI-11567-SWT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

AMERICAN IDENTITY INC
Employer

**OC: 10/29/06 R: 01
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a - Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated November 22, 2006, reference 01, that concluded she was discharged for work-connected misconduct. A telephone hearing was held on December 20, 2006. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. The claimant participated in the hearing. Bonnie Huygen participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer with a witness, Sue Wallin.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant discharged for work-connected misconduct?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant worked full-time for the employer as a machine operator from October 19, 1992, to October 30, 2006. The claimant was informed and understood that under the employer's work rules, harassment of any kind was prohibited. The claimant received a verbal warning on February 2, 2006, and a final written warning April 12, 2006, for confrontational conduct toward coworkers. The claimant was informed that she was not to leave for work area to talk to other employees.

On October 25, 2006, the claimant went into another work area and confronted an employee who the claimant had heard was spreading rumors about her. The employee felt intimidated by the claimant's conduct and reported what she had done to management.

On October 30, 2006, the employer discharged the claimant for repeated instances of inappropriate conduct and harassment of other employees.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue in this case is whether the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The claimant's violation of a known work rule and previous warnings was a willful and material breach of the duties and obligations to the employer and a substantial disregard of the standards of behavior the employer had the right to expect of the claimant. Work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has been established in this case.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated November 22, 2006, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits until she has been

paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

Steven A. Wise
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

saw/css