

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**KRISTY R WESTPHAL**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-15884-VST**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**MIDWEST OPPORTUNITIES INC**  
Employer

**OC: 11/13/11  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
§ 17A.12-3 – Non-appearance of a Party  
871 IAC 26.8(5) – Decision on the Record

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated December 7, 2011, reference 01, which concluded that the claimant was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. A telephone hearing was scheduled for January 18, 2012. The claimant provided a telephone number at which she was supposed to be available. When that number was dialed by the administrative law judge, voice mail with the single word “Dave” answered. The administrative law judge double-checked the number and called again. The same voice mail came on. A detailed message was left for the claimant on how to participate in the hearing. The administrative law judge then called the employer. The employer has only automated answering and it was difficult to find anyone who would pick up the phone and answer. Finally at 9:39 a.m. a representative answered the phone. The administrative law judge explained that the claimant had not called and that there was sufficient evidence in the record on which to base a decision on the record. The employer consented. Based on the appellant’s failure to participate in the hearing, the administrative file, and the law, the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision are entered.

**ISSUE:**

Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The appellant failed to provide a telephone number at which she could be reached for the hearing and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

A careful review of the information in the administrative file has been conducted to determine whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act § 17A.12-3 provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

871 IAC 26.8(3), (4) and (5) provide:

Withdrawals and postponements.

(3) If, due to emergency or other good cause, a party, having received due notice, is unable to attend a hearing or request postponement within the prescribed time, the presiding officer may, if no decision has been issued, reopen the record and, with notice to all parties, schedule another hearing. If a decision has been issued, the decision may be vacated upon the presiding officer's own motion or at the request of a party within 15 days after the mailing date of the decision and in the absence of an appeal to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections and appeals. If a decision is vacated, notice shall be given to all parties of a new hearing to be held and decided by another presiding officer. Once a decision has become final as provided by statute, the presiding officer has no jurisdiction to reopen the record or vacate the decision.

(4) A request to reopen a record or vacate a decision may be heard ex parte by the presiding officer. The granting or denial of such a request may be used as a grounds for appeal to the employment appeal board of the department of inspections and appeals upon the issuance of the presiding officer's final decision in the case.

(5) If good cause for postponement or reopening has not been shown, the presiding officer shall make a decision based upon whatever evidence is properly in the record.

The administrative law judge has carefully reviewed the information in the administrative file in the record and concludes that the unemployment insurance decision previously entered in this case is correct and should be affirmed.

Pursuant to the statute and the rule, the appellant must make a written request to the administrative law judge that the hearing be reopened within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The written request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the beginning of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at its scheduled time.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated December 7, 2011, reference 01, is affirmed. The decision disqualifying the claimant from receiving benefits remains in effect. This decision will become final unless a written request establishing good cause to reopen the record is made to the administrative law judge within 15 days of the date of this decision.

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Vicki L. Seeck  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

vls/pjs