

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

JANE A MOLLENBECK
4480 – 87TH ST
URBANDALE IA 50322

DILLARD DEPARTMENT STORES INC
1600 CANTRELL RD
LITTLE ROCK AR 72201-1110

Appeal Number: 05A-UI-04866-BT
OC: 04/10/05 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the ***Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.***

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96 5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 - Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Dillard Department Stores, Inc. (employer) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated April 27, 2005, reference 01, which held that Jane Mollenbeck (claimant) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on May 26, 2005. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through David Markoff, Store Manager.

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 employed as a part-time sales associate from July 10, 2004 through April 9, 2005. She was discharged for insubordination and losing her temper on the sales floor. The store manager heard a loud altercation the claimant was having with another sales associate. The manager approached the two and tried to get the claimant to lower her voice but the claimant kept screaming. The manager managed to get the claimant to the stock room but she refused to calm down and lower her voice. She was told that if she did not lower her voice, she would be removed from the store but that had no effect. When she would not lower her voice, the manager finally told the claimant to leave the store or he was going to call the police. He walked towards the register to call 911 and he saw the claimant walking towards the front of the store. The manager walked towards the door also but instead of leaving, the claimant went into another stockroom. Shortly thereafter, she came out and started screaming again. Eventually the claimant went outside the store and waited for the manager to bring her keys to her from her sister who was working. The manager heard repeated comments about the commotion after the incident was over.

The claimant was upset because her co-worker called her a baby and the claimant felt the co-worker should have shown her more respect. She reported her anger had built up as her co-workers had not treated her very well and the store manager would not let her talk. They took her sales and took her "holds" and rang them up for themselves. She was upset that the employer threatened them that if they did not meet their goals, their pay was going to get cut. The claimant was also angry that a dockworker grabbed her arm one time and asked when they were going to get married. She had never reported any of these problems to the store manager because she was "scared" of managers.

The claimant filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective April 10, 2005 and has received benefits after the separation from employment in the amount of \$1,302.00.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

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 employer has the burden to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The claimant was discharged after she refused to stop screaming on the sales floor even after the employer told her she would be removed from the store and that the police would be called if she did not lower her voice. The claimant's failure to calm down and lower her voice 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 and benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated April 27, 2005, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,302.00.

sdb/pjs