

**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**

**JEFFERY L SWEENEY  
1016 2<sup>ND</sup> ST  
BOONE IA 50036-3632**

**TACO JOHNS OF IOWA  
1401 N 'C' AVE  
SIOUX FALLS SD 57104**

**Appeal Number: 06A-UI-06927-MT  
OC: 06/11/06 R: 02  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

**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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated June 30, 2006, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on July 27, 2006. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Mike Lee, Vice President of Operations. Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on June 9, 2006.

Claimant was discharged on June 10, 2006 by employer because claimant had a coworker punch him out and because claimant left work early. Claimant was scheduled to work until 7:00 p.m. Claimant left the store to perform required marketing at about 2:30 p.m. Claimant did not return to punch out. Claimant instead called in at 4:30 p.m. and asked a coworker to punch him out. Claimant had not been warned that having other workers punch him out or that leaving early would result in discharge.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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).

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be

based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning time reporting. Claimant was not warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because claimant did not intentionally violate the rule on punching out. Employer failed to provide evidence of a prior warning placing claimant on notice that his job was in jeopardy. The prior warning would establish intentional conduct on claimant's part. Employer had absolutely no documentation of a prior warning telling claimant that he could not have another employee clock him out. Employer provided no evidence to establish a warning that claimant could not leave early. The lack of a warning detracts from a finding of intentional conduct. There is also insufficient evidence to establish that claimant was not working until the time he was clocked out by a co worker. Marketing was an essential part of the job. It is plausible that claimant was working during the time in question. It would be entirely speculative to hold otherwise. As such misconduct has not been established. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was not discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is not disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated June 30, 2006, reference 01, is affirmed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

mdm\pjs