

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

CAU T NGUYEN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-08582-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

BEEF PRODUCTS INC
Employer

**Original Claim: 05/03/09
Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Beef Products (employer) appealed a representative's June 8, 2009 decision (reference 01) that concluded Cau Nguyen (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for July 1, 2009. The claimant did not provide a telephone number for the hearing and, therefore, did not participate. The employer participated by Rick Wood, Human Resources Manager, and Jennifer Stubbs, Corporate Human Resources Benefits Supervisor. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on October 21, 2008, as a full-time laborer. At the time of his hire, the claimant was asked to complete a medical evaluation. The claimant answered "no" to questions asking him if he had any industrial injury or accident, no matter how minor, and if he had ever been sent to a doctor as a result of a work injury or disease or had a workers' compensation claim. The claimant was placed in a position with no physical restrictions lifting heavy objects.

The employer requested the claimant's medical records and found that the claimant had shoulder or arm surgery through workers' compensation with a previous employer. When the employer reviewed his file, it was clear that the claimant had not answered the questions completely or truthfully. The employer interviewed the claimant. The claimant said he did not answer truthfully because he did not think he would be hired if he answered correctly. The claimant told the employer he was uncertain whether he had any work restrictions. The employer terminated the claimant on his for misrepresentation on the medical evaluation form.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the 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.

871 IAC 24.32(6) provides:

(6) False work application. When a willfully and deliberately false statement is made on an Application for Work form, and this willful and deliberate falsification does or could result in endangering the health, safety or morals of the applicant or others, or result in exposing the employer to legal liabilities or penalties, or result in placing the employer in jeopardy, such falsification shall be an act of misconduct in connection with the employer.

Misconduct serious enough to warrant a discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). In the present case, the employer must prove that the Medical Evaluation was an application for hire, the claimant willfully and deliberately falsified the Survey, and the falsification could cause harm to the claimant, the employer, or others. First of all, the claimant was not hired until after completing the Medical Evaluation. The Medical Evaluation was part of the application for hire. The claimant admitted to the employer that he willfully and deliberately answered falsely so he would be hired. The employer could have been exposed to liability if the claimant were injured during work time. The claimant willfully made a false statement on his work application. The false statement caused the employer to hire the claimant. The claimant's willful falsification of his application was misconduct. As such, he is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. 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.

b. (1) 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. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The claimant has received benefits since filing the claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits may now constitute an overpayment. The issue of the overpayment is remanded for determination.

DECISION:

The representative's June 8, 2009 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, because the claimant was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The issue of the overpayment is remanded for determination.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw