

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

STEPHIE M BROWN  
3347 NEW LONDON RD  
NEW LONDON IA 52645-9193

METROGROUP CORP  
901 W BOND  
LINCOLN NE 68521

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-06713-HT  
OC: 01/29/06 R: 04  
Claimant: Appellant (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) – Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Stephnie Brown, filed an appeal from a decision dated June 29, 2006, reference 02. The decision disqualified her from receiving unemployment benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on July 19, 2006. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer, Metrogroup, did not provide a telephone number where a representative could be contacted and did not participate.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony of the witness and having examined all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Stephnie Brown was employed by Metrogroup from

August 2004 until May 25, 2006. She was a full-time machine operator working 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The employer's attendance policy is kept on a point basis with points dropping off on the one-year anniversary.

On March 13, 2006, the claimant received a final written warning for absenteeism. She had accumulated nine points and the warning advised her she must reduce her attendance points to 6.5 before she missed any more work or she would be discharged. Ms. Brown was absent on May 23, 2006 and was no-call/no-show to work. She called in sick on May 24, 2006 and was discharged the next day when she returned to work because her attendance points had not reduced to the required level.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of her unemployment benefits.

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(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

The claimant had been advised her job was in jeopardy as a result of her absenteeism. The final occurrences were due to illness, but at least one was not properly reported. A properly reported illness cannot be considered misconduct as it is not volitional. Cosper v. IDJS, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982), but as the absence of May 23, 2006 was not properly reported, it is unexcused. In conjunction with the other absences this is excessive and under the provisions of the above Administrative Code section, this is misconduct for which the claimant is disqualified.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of June 29, 2006, reference 02, is affirmed. Stephnie Brown is disqualified and benefits are withheld until she has earned ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

bgh/cs