

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

ONTARIO WHITESIDE
Claimant

BERTCH CABINET MFG INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-15363-DB-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 04/19/20
Claimant: Appellant (1R)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the May 10, 2021 (reference 10) unemployment insurance decision that found that the claimant was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits effective April 19, 2020 as he was still employed at the same hours and same wages as his original contract of hire. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 31, 2021. The claimant participated personally. The employer did not participate. The administrative law judge took official notice of the claimant's administrative records. The hearing was consolidated with Appeal No. 21A-UI-15368-DB-T; 21A-UI-15358-DB-T; 21A-UI-15360-DB-T; 21A-UI-15361-DB-T; and 21A-UI-15367-DB-T.

ISSUE:

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision that found the claimant was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits was mailed to the claimant's correct address of record on May 10, 2021. The decision had found that the claimant was not eligible for benefits effective May 26, 2020 as he had voluntarily quit work with this employer without good cause attributable to the employer.

The claimant received the decision in the mail. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by May 20, 2021. The claimant filed the appeal on July 6, 2021, which was after the due date listed. The claimant filed the appeal after the deadline because he thought the matter had already been taken care of when he participated in the fact-finding interview.

Another decision dated May 27, 2021 (reference 10) found that the claimant was still employed with this employer at the same hours and same wages as his original contract of hire, even though a permanent separation occurred. As such, the issue of whether the claimant is able to and available for work effective May 26, 2020 and thereafter as he was no longer employed with

this employer will be remanded to the Benefits Bureau for an initial investigation and determination.

Claimant's administrative records establish that he may have earned ten times his weekly-benefit amount in insured wages following his separation from employment with this employer from Masterbrand Cabinets Inc. in the fourth quarter of 2020. That matter will be remanded to the Benefits Bureau for an initial investigation and determination.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes as follows:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of issuing the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was issued, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the issuing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the issuing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa

1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The claimant's failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). As such, the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2) and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

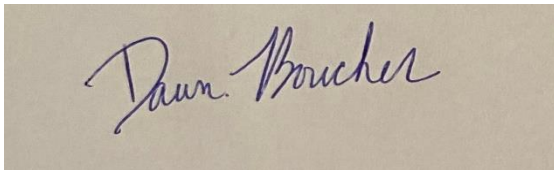
DECISION:

The May 10, 2021 (reference 10) decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

REMAND:

The issue of whether the claimant has earned ten times his weekly-benefit amount in insured wages after his May 26, 2020 separation date with this employer is remanded to the Benefits Bureau of Iowa Workforce Development for an initial investigation and determination.

The issue of whether the claimant was able to and available for work effective his May 26, 2020 separation date and thereafter is remanded to the Benefits Bureau of Iowa Workforce Development for an initial investigation and determination. It is noted that claimant was approved for PUA benefits for specific weeks listed in Appeal No. 21A-DUA-01016-DB-T.



Dawn Boucher
Administrative Law Judge

September 9, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

db/mh