

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

FRANCISCO MARTINEZ
PO BOX 194
COLUMBUS CITY IA 52737

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
c/o TALX UC EXPRESS
PO BOX 283
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283

Appeal Number: 05A-UI-04308-AT
OC: 03/27/05 R: 04
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, 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 96.5-2a – Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Tyson Fresh Meats filed a timely appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated April 15, 2005, reference 01, which allowed benefits to Francisco Martinez. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held on May 11, 2005. Although Mr. Martinez provided a telephone number at which he could be contacted, there was no answer at that number when called at the time of the hearing. Mr. Martinez did not contact the Appeals Bureau until after the hearing had ended. Community Liason Officer Eva Garcia and Personnel Manager Ronald Udell, participated for the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony of the witnesses and having examined all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge find: Francisco Martinez was a production worker for Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc. from October 13, 1998 until he was discharged on March 14, 2005. On March 10, 2005, he left work early without permission to attend a meeting with his lawyer. Company policy prohibits leaving early without permission. Mr. Martinez was discharged for this incident.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The question is whether the evidence in the record establishes the claimant was discharged for disqualifying misconduct. It does not.

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).

Excessive unexcused absenteeism is misconduct. See Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984). A single unexcused absence, even when an individual fails to follow appropriate policies in regards to the absence, is not considered excessive. See Sallis v. Employment Appeal Board, 437 N.W.2d 895 (Iowa 1989). Since the discharge was based solely on the unexcused absence on May 10, 2005, the administrative law judge concludes that the evidence does not establish excessive unexcused absenteeism. Benefits must be withheld.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated April 15, 2005, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant is entitled to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible.

kjf/tjc