

**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**

**RICHARD A COMRIED
396 – 21ST ST SE
CEDAR RAPIDS IA 52403**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
c/o DAVE BERGEON
EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE
121 R UNIVERSITY SERVICES BLDG
IOWA CITY IA 52242**

**WYTHE WILLEY
101 – 2ND ST SE STE 502
PO BOX 2145
CEDAR RAPIDS IA 52406-2145**

**Appeal Number: 04A-UI-06070-S2T
OC: 05/09/04 R: 03
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 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The University of Iowa (employer) appealed a representative's May 24, 2004 decision (reference 01) that concluded Richard Comried (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 held on June 23, 2004. The claimant was represented by Wythe Willey, Attorney at Law, and participated personally. The employer was represented by Kevin Ward, Senior Associate Director of Human Resources, and participated by James Walker, Director of Health Protection Office, and James Pyrz, Waste Environmental Programs Manager.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on November 1, 2002, as a full-time hazardous material specialist. The claimant and a co-worker had an argument in April 2003, and received warnings for exhibiting threatening behavior.

On April 27, 2004, the co-worker started yelling at the claimant. The co-worker came around the table toward the claimant. The claimant moved around the table toward the co-worker and yelled back. The co-worker complained about the claimant's behavior and the claimant was placed on administrative leave on April 28, 2004. On May 4, 2004, the employer terminated the claimant for harassing the co-worker. The co-worker continues to be employed by the employer.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes he was 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).

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). If a party has the power to produce more explicit and direct evidence than it chooses to do, it may be fairly inferred that other evidence would lay open deficiencies in that party's case. Crosser v. Iowa Department of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976). The employer had the power to produce eyewitness testimony but did not. The administrative law judge concludes that the hearsay evidence provided by the employer is not more persuasive than the claimant's denial of such conduct. The employer has not carried its burden of proof to establish that the claimant committed any act of misconduct in connection with employment for which he was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. The claimant is allowed unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The representative's May 24, 2004 decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The claimant was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

bas/b