

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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**SARA K VINSAND**  
Claimant

**CRESTVIEW NURSING & REHABILITATION**  
Employer

**APPEAL NO. 16A-UI-04788-B2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 04/03/16  
Claimant: Respondent (2R)**

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Iowa Code § 96.5-1 – Voluntary Quit  
Iowa Code § 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits  
871 IA Admin. Code 24(10) – Employer Participation in Fact Finding

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated April 21, 2016, reference 02, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on May 24, 2016. Employer participated by hearing representative Natalie Olds, with witnesses Stacy Geopfert and Tammy Greenfield. Claimant failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Employer's Exhibits 1-3 were admitted into evidence.

**ISSUES:**

Whether claimant quit for good cause attributable to employer?

Whether claimant was overpaid benefits?

If claimant was overpaid benefits, should claimant repay benefits or should employer be charged due to employer's participation or lack thereof in fact finding?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on March 20, 2016. Claimant quit her employment on March 25, 2016. Claimant had, through her sister, texted employer on March 23, 2016 to give her two weeks' notice of her intent to end her employment. On March 25, 2016 at 11:31 a.m. claimant texted her employer asking if she was working at all over the next two weeks, or whether she should just come and clear out her locker. Employer hadn't responded to the text in the next three minutes. On the same date at 11:34 a.m. claimant texted the same employer stating, "Ok, I'll get my stuff out of my locker then." Employer did not schedule claimant for any more days after receiving this text as employer interpreted it to mean that claimant was quitting immediately.

Claimant had multiple personal issues which led to her not being reliably at work for the last few months prior to her departure. Claimant received multiple verbal warnings from employer about her coming late to work, leaving early, or skipping shifts altogether.

Employer did substantially participate in fact finding in this matter.

As claimant did not participate in the hearing, the administrative law judge does not know if claimant has received benefits in this matter.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

Iowa Code § 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if un rebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)“b” as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

In this matter the administrative law judge first must determine whether claimant quit her employment, or was discharged. Based on the testimony received, claimant certainly quit her employment effective April 6, 2016. Claimant filed her original claim on April 3, 2016, so the only days left for the administrative law judge to make a determination are April 3, 2016 through April 5, 2016. As claimant texted employer on March 25, 2016, asking if she was going to be scheduled, and then three minutes later texted employer again to say that she would just come and clean out her locker now, claimant is seen as having accelerated her quit date. Employer must be given more than three minutes to respond to a text prior to claimant deciding to just clean out her locker. Employer stated that the decision not to schedule claimant for the final week and a half was made after claimant’s March 25, 2016 texts. This was a reasonable response on the part of the employer.

As claimant has voluntarily quit her employment, the next question before the administrative law judge was whether claimant’s quit was for good cause attributable to employer. Claimant has offered no testimony or exhibits showing anything that might constitute good cause attributable to employer for claimant’s quit. Claimant is not entitled to unemployment benefits.

The overpayment issue was not addressed as claimant did not participate in the hearing. Said matter will be remanded to the fact finder to determine the amount of overpayments received by claimant, if any.

The issue of employer participation was addressed. Employer did substantially participate in fact finding such that employer’s account will not be charged for any overpayments received by claimant in this matter.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated April 21, 2016, reference 02, is reversed and remanded to the fact finder for determination of amounts of overpayments received by claimant, if any. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant’s weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible. Employer’s account shall not be charged for any overpayments received by claimant in this matter.

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Blair A. Bennett  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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