

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

BRYAN C PONCE
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-01617-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

ANNETT HOLDINGS INC
Employer

**OC: 01/13/08 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Annett Holdings (employer) appealed a representative's February 6, 2008 decision (reference 01) that concluded Bryan Ponce (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 scheduled for March 4, 2008. The claimant participated personally. The employer was represented by Lesley Buhler, Hearings Representative, and participated by Greg Brown, General Manager, and Chris Harmison, Service Manager. The employer offered and Exhibit One was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on March 13, 2006, as a full-time body technician/new truck preparation person. The employer issued the claimant written warnings on August 3, September 15, November 22, and December 5, 2006, and January 15, and August 27, 2007, for failure to follow instructions. The employer notified the claimant in each warning that further infractions could result in termination from employment. On or about January 7, 2008, the employer verbally warned the claimant that he had not properly installed equipment in a tractor trailer unit. The claimant did not bolt down the equipment inside the dash, which may have caused the employer liability. The manager caught the mistake. The claimant knew how to properly install the unit but did not because he wanted to save time.

On January 11, 2008, the claimant felt rushed and did not properly bolt down the equipment inside the dash. The main terminal found the error and corrected the situation. The employer terminated the claimant on January 14, 2008.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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.

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). Misconduct connotes volition. A failure in job performance which results from inability or incapacity is not volitional and therefore not misconduct. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Services, 275 N.W.2d 445 (Iowa 1979). Repeated failure to follow an employer's instructions in the performance of duties is misconduct. Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Company, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa App. 1990).

In this case, the employer met its burden of proof to show volition. The claimant knew he was supposed to bolt down the unit, knew how to bolt down the unit, and chose not to do so. An employer has a right to expect employees to follow instructions in the performance of the job. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by repeatedly failing to follow the employer's instructions. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such, the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

The claimant has received benefits since filing the claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits now constitute an overpayment which must be repaid.

DECISION:

The representative's February 6, 2008 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, because the claimant was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,735.00.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/kjw