

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

DONNA M LUNSFORD
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-07780-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CASEYS MARKETING COMPANY
Employer

OC: 07/27/08 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated August 20, 2008, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on September 15, 2008. Claimant participated personally with witness Doris Hall. Employer participated by Sharon Mason, Manager. Exhibits One and Two were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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 July 25, 2008.

Claimant was discharged on July 27, 2008 by employer because claimant did not report for work that day. Claimant had been penciled in the schedule. Claimant did not notice that she was scheduled for work. Claimant generally was not scheduled for weekends. Claimant had one prior warning on her record for absenteeism. That warning was over a year old.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning absenteeism. Claimant was not warned concerning this policy because the warning was over a year old. The warning is too stale to place claimant on notice that her job was in jeopardy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because claimant incurred only one instance of absenteeism in the last year. The prior absence is too stale to count as a second occurrence. The lack of a current warning detracts from a finding an intentional violation of policy. Furthermore, the Iowa Supreme Court has opined that one unexcused absence is not misconduct even when it followed nine other absences. Sallis v. EAB, 437 N.W.2d 895 (Iowa 1989). Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984), held that the absences must be both excessive and unexcused. Two absences in over a year's time is not excessive even if unexcused. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was not discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is not disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated August 20, 2008, reference 01, is affirmed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs