

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**RAQUEL A MURILLO**

Claimant

**APPEAL 20A-UI-07124-AW-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SWIFT PORK COMPANY**

Employer

**OC: 04/12/20**

**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2)j – Benefit Eligibility Conditions – Leave of Absence  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) – Availability Disqualifications – Leave of Absence

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from the June 15, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 4, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. Claimant participated. Spanish interpretation was provided by Raul (ID 12779) of CTS Language Link. Employer did not participate. No exhibits were admitted. Official notice was taken of the administrative record.

**ISSUE:**

Whether claimant was able to work and available for work.  
Whether claimant was on an approved leave of absence.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant began her employment with Swift Pork Company on June 26, 2000. She is currently employed as a full-time Meat Packer. On or about April 12, 2020, employer informed employees that, due to Covid-19, they could either continue work or take a leave of absence. Claimant opted not to work and took a leave of absence. Claimant has underlying medical issues and thought it would be best to quarantine; though, claimant was not advised by her physician to do so. Claimant returned to work June 15, 2020. Employer had work available for claimant between April 12, 2020 and June 15, 2020. During that time, claimant was otherwise able to and available for work. Claimant filed her initial claim for unemployment benefits effective April 12, 2020.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not able to and available for work, as she was on an approved leave of absence. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2)j provides:

Benefit eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

j. Leave of absence. A leave of absence negotiated with the consent of both parties, employer and employee, is deemed a period of voluntary unemployment for the employee-individual, and the individual is considered ineligible for benefits for the period.

(1) If at the end of a period or term of negotiated leave of absence the employer fails to reemploy the employee-individual, the individual is considered laid off and eligible for benefits.

(2) If the employee-individual fails to return at the end of the leave of absence and subsequently becomes unemployed the individual is considered as having voluntarily quit and therefore is ineligible for benefits.

(3) The period or term of a leave of absence may be extended, but only if there is evidence that both parties have voluntarily agreed.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(10) The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

An individual claiming benefits has the burden of proof that she is to be able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22. Claimant was on a voluntary leave of absence from April 12, 2020 until June 15, 2020. Therefore, claimant was not available for work. Benefits are denied.

**NOTE TO CLAIMANT:** This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic

Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

**DECISION:**

The June 15, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant was not able to and available for work effective April 12, 2020. Benefits are denied.



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Adrienne C. Williamson  
Administrative Law Judge  
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August 11, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

acw/sam