

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**THANIA T VACCARO**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-07124-LT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**CRST INC**  
Employer

**OC: 07/06/08 R: 12**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2R)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) - Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed a timely appeal from the July 29, 2008, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a telephone conference hearing was held on August 20, 2008. Claimant participated. Employer participated through Sandy Matt and Kiley Eisenmann. Employer's Exhibits 1 through 3 were received.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether claimant was discharged for reasons related to job misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits and if so, whether she is overpaid benefits as a result.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having heard the testimony and having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed as a full time over-the-road driver from November 21, 2007 until April 21, 2008 when she was discharged. She last worked April 17, 2008 and she and her co-driver used the company truck to drive around Iowa City to locate a rental vehicle because of a dispute with her co-driver. They had delivered a load in Iowa City and the next stop was Cedar Rapids where they would leave the truck. They could have arranged a rental car with Eisenmann in Cedar Rapids. Instead of waiting until they arrived in Cedar Rapids or contacting Eisenmann by phone or Qualcomm (electronic messaging) for assistance, they drove approximately 25 miles out of the way in Coralville to rent a car according to the global positioning system (GPS). Employer had difficulty in getting responses to messages from the truck that day. Ten messages were sent and claimant and her co-driver did not respond until they got to Cedar Rapids to meet with the safety department about log violations. Claimant admitted running illegally on her log and co-driver's log and sleeping no more than 4 hours per day recently because of the disputes with the co-driver. She refused other drivers Eisenmann offered. Claimant had always sought permission to use the truck for personal errands before and had always been granted permission. Employer's policy provides for immediate termination without warning for unauthorized use of the truck.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits in the amount of \$381.00 since filing a claim with an effective date of July 6, 2008.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct.

Iowa Code § 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.

Claimant's use of the company vehicle without permission and admitted log book and driving violations, when other reasonable options were available had she communicated with employer, are evidence of willful misconduct. Benefits are denied.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code § 96.3(7). In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code § 96.3(7)b is remanded to the Agency.

#### **DECISION:**

The July 29, 2008, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has

worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$381.00.

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Dévon M. Lewis  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

dml/pjs