

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**ANN M VAN VOORST**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 17A-UI-07755-S1-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**ANDERSON PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES INC**  
Employer

**OC: 05/21/17  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.4-3 – Able and Available  
Section 96.6(2) - Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Ann Van Voorst (claimant) appealed a representative's June 30, 2017, decision (reference 03) that concluded she was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits from June 11, 2017, through June 17, 2017. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for August 17, 2017. The claimant participated personally. Anderson Professional Services (employer) provided a telephone number but could not be reached at the time of the hearing. Messages were left for the employer. Exhibits D-1 and D-2 were received into evidence. The claimant offered and Exhibit A was received into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the appeal was filed in a timely manner and, if so, whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was offered work for the week ending June 17, 2017. She did not respond to the offer and did not work. The claimant may have been out of town visiting her dying uncle that week.

A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on June 30, 2017. She did not receive the decision within ten days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by July 10, 2017. The claimant received the decision on July 31, 2017. The appeal was filed on July 31, 2017, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did not receive the decision within ten days of the mailing date. After she found out about the decision she took twenty-one days to file her appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that her failure to file a timely appeal after receiving notice of the decision was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action

of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

The next issue is whether the claimant was available for work during the week ending June 17, 2017. The administrative law judge concludes she is not.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(25) provides:

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

(25) If the claimant is out of town for personal reasons for the major portion of the workweek and is not in the labor market.

When an employee is away from home for personal reasons, she is considered to be unavailable for work. The claimant was out of town and not accepting work. She is considered to be unavailable for work for the week ending June 17, 2017. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits for the week ending June 17, 2017, due to her unavailability for work.

**DECISION:**

The June 30, 2017, reference 03, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was timely. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits for the week ending June 17, 2017, due to her unavailability for work.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/rvs