

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**TERRY J SMITH**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-12543-MT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**ALUM LINE INC**  
Employer

**OC: 10/06/13**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits, Employer Chargeability for non participation at Fact Finding

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated November 5, 2013, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on December 3, 2013. Claimant participated. Employer participated by Gary Gooder, President; Jeff McAllister, Operations Manager; Ken Dotzler, Fabricator and Perry Thomas, Foreman. Exhibits One through Twenty-three were admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issues in this matter are whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct and is overpaid unemployment benefits.

**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 October 7, 2013. Employer discharged claimant because he left work due to alleged illness. Claimant told employer he was too sick to work. Claimant did not appear physically ill. A coworker also left. The coworker said he was under a lot of stress and felt that his heart was going to explode. Claimant was upset over another worker coming back to work. Claimant left because he too was upset. Claimant was too upset to work. Claimant worked with a press. Claimant was afraid he would not have the concentration to work safely. The machinery is dangerous if not properly operated.

Claimant was fully aware that interference with work production and falsification of absenteeism could result in discharge.

Employer did participate at the fact finding interview.

There is no evidence that proves claimant received benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation.

**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.

871 IAC 24.32(4) provides:

(4) Report required. The claimant's statement and the employer's statement must give detailed facts as to the specific reason for the claimant's discharge. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. In cases where a suspension or disciplinary layoff exists, the claimant is considered as discharged, and the issue of misconduct shall be resolved.

The gravity of the incident, number of policy violations and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning falsification of a reason for an absence and interference with work. Claimant was informed concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because claimant was too sick to work. Claimant properly reported the absence. This is an excusable event. Claimant did not falsify any reason for absenteeism. Claimant's statements that he was too upset to work safely are supported by the coworker's same symptoms. 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 November 5, 2013, reference 01, is affirmed. Benefits shall be allowed.

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Marlon Mormann  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs