

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

RYAN D MCDONALD
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-03716-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

LENNOX MFG INC
Employer

**OC: 12/24/06 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated March 20, 2007, reference 03, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on April 25, 2007. Claimant participated personally. Employer declined to participate. Exhibit One was 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 February 21, 2007.

Claimant was suspended on February 21, 2007 by employer because claimant left the building on a paid break February 16, 2007. Claimant was discharged for the infraction and later rehired under a last-chance agreement. Employer's policy and union contract requires that a disciplinary warning be issued within three days of the incident. This warning was issued on the fifth day. Claimant did not know it was against the rules to leave the building while on a paid break. Claimant had no prior warnings for leaving the building while on a paid break. Two other employees received a one-day suspension for the infraction.

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 leaving the building while on break. Claimant was not warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because employer failed to follow its three day rule when issuing disciplinary actions. This is not a valid disciplinary action under employer's policy. Furthermore, claimant was rehired after investigation. Therefore, there is no current incident on which to base a finding of misconduct. 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 March 20, 2007, reference 03, is reversed. 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/css