

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ROBERT C STAMPER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 16A-UI-05301-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MILLENNIUM AGRICULTURE LC
Employer

OC: 06/14/15
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Robert Stamper filed an appeal from the April 13, 2016, reference 04, decision that allowed benefits for the notice period of March 20, 2016 through April 2, 2016, provided Mr. Stamper met all other eligibility requirements, but that disqualified Mr. Stamper for benefits effective April 4, 2016, based on an Agency conclusion that Mr. Stamper voluntarily quit effective April 4, 2016 without good cause attributable to the employer. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on May 24, 2016. Mr. Stamper participated. Nancy Everman represented the employer. Exhibit A was received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On April 13, 2016, Iowa Workforce Development mailed a copy of the April 13, 2016, reference 07, decision to claimant Robert Stamper at his last-known address of record. The decision allowed benefits for the notice period of March 20, 2016 through April 2, 2016, provided Mr. Stamper met all other eligibility requirements, but that disqualified Mr. Stamper for benefits effective April 4, 2016, based on an Agency conclusion that Mr. Stamper voluntarily quit effective April 4, 2016 without good cause attributable to the employer. The decision stated that an appeal from the decision must be postmarked by April 23, 2016 or be received by Iowa Workforce Development Appeal Section by that date. The decision also stated that if the appeal deadline fell on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday, the appeal period would be extended to the next working day. April 23, 2016 was a Saturday and the next working day was Monday, April 25, 2016. Accordingly the appeal deadline was extended by operation of law to Monday, April 25, 2016. The decision provided telephone numbers that Mr. Stamper could use to contact workforce development if he had questions about the decision. The decision also contained instructions for appealing the decision. Mr. Stamper received the decision on or about April 14, 2016. Mr. Stamper did not thoroughly read the decision when he received it. On May 10, 2015, Mr. Stamper went to the Decorah Workforce Development Center and spoke with a workforce

advisor. On that same day, Mr. Stamper wrote his appeal from the April 13, 2016, reference 07, decision and hand-delivered the appeal to the workforce advisor at the Decorah Workforce Development Center. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal by fax on May 10, 2016.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 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, subsection 10, 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-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency 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).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b).

Mr. Stamper's appeal was filed on May 10, 2016, when Mr. Stamper hand-delivered the appeal to the Decorah Workforce Development Center staff.

The evidence in the record establishes 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 Mr. Stamper did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. Mr. Stamper received the decision in a timely manner, but did not take any steps to file an appeal from the decision until May 10, 2016, 15 days beyond the extended appeal deadline. Mr. Stamper's appeal was late because Mr. Stamper did not read the decision, did not contact Workforce Development in a timely manner questions he had about the decision, and did not take timely steps to file an appeal the decision. The late filing of the appeal was not attributable to Iowa Workforce Development error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. Accordingly, there is not good cause under the law to treat the late appeal as a timely appeal. See 871 IAC 24.35(2). Because the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the lower decision from which Mr. Stamper appeals. See Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The April 13, 2016, reference 04, decision is affirmed. The claimant's appeal was untimely. The decision that allowed benefits for the notice period of March 20, 2016 through April 2, 2016 provided the claimant met all other eligibility requirements, but that disqualified the claimant for benefits effective April 4, 2016, based on an Agency conclusion that claimant voluntarily quit effective April 4, 2016 without good cause attributable to the employer, remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/can