

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SANJUANA TANNER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-04914-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

IAC IOWA CITY LLC
Employer

OC: 02-10-08 R: 03
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the May 12, 2008, reference 03, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on June 5, 2008. The claimant did participate. The employer did participate through Teresa Feldman, Assistant Human Resources Manager.

ISSUE:

Was the claimant discharged for work-related misconduct?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed the testimony and all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed as a finish operator, full-time, beginning March 10, 2008, through March 20, 2008, when she was discharged. The claimant was subjected to a pre-employment drug test, which was administered on March 17 after she had already begun her employment. The claimant was not tested due to any DOT regulation.

The claimant was notified by the company that she tested positive for marijuana on March 20 and that she was being discharged. The claimant was not given a copy of the employer's drug and alcohol testing policy. She was not notified of her test results in writing by certified mail, nor was she advised of her ability to have the split sample tested at her own cost.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

The employer has the burden of proving disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982).

Iowa Code section 730.5(9) requires that a written drug screen policy be provided to every employee subject to testing. Iowa Code section 730.5(7)(i)(1) mandates that an employer, upon a confirmed positive drug or alcohol test by a certified laboratory, notify the employee of the test results by certified mail and the right to obtain a confirmatory test before taking disciplinary action against an employee. Upon a positive drug screen, Iowa Code section 730.5(9)(g) requires, under certain circumstances, that an employer offer substance abuse evaluation and treatment to an employee the first time the employee has a positive drug test. The Iowa Supreme Court has held that an employer may not "benefit from an unauthorized drug test by relying on it as a basis to disqualify an employee from unemployment compensation benefits." Eaton v. Iowa Employment Appeal Board, 602 N.W.2d at 558.

The employer failed to provide a written copy of the drug testing policy to the claimant, failed to give her notice of the test results according to the strict and explicit statutory requirements, and failed to allow her an opportunity for another test even if a split sample was taken. The employer has not complied with the statutory provisions of Iowa Code section 730.5 and, thus, the claimant may not be disqualified from receipt of unemployment insurance benefits. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

DECISION:

The May 12, 2008, reference 03, decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/kjw