IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS

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

BRANDON J GUARDADO
Claimant

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-01601-MT

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE DECISION

OC: 01/09/11
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 February 8, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on March 10, 2011. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Cassundra Jackson, human resource clerk.

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 having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on January 7, 2011.

Claimant was discharged on January 7, 2011 by employer because claimant allegedly threw a loin at a coworker over a dispute. Claimant did not throw the loin at a coworker. Claimant had two prior warnings for safely violations. Employer discharges for three safety policy violations. Claimant was aware his job was in jeopardy.

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 allegedly violated employer's policy concerning safety. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because employer failed to provide firsthand evidence of throwing product. Employer had only hearsay to prove the incident. Where conflicts exist, the hearsay is not as credible as the sworn testimony. Employer needed a firsthand witness or a copy of the video to prove claimant threw product by a preponderance of the evidence. 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 February 8, 2011, reference 01, 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/kjw