

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

SHAWN G FRY
Claimant

D OF S FOODS INC
Employer

APPEAL 19A-UI-01810-CL-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 01/27/19
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Protest

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed an appeal from the February 19, 2019, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits based upon an untimely protest. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on March 15, 2019. Claimant did not register for the hearing and did not participate. Employer participated through human resources coordinator Jennifer Kilborn. Department's Exhibit D-1 was received.

ISSUE:

Is the employer's protest timely?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant's notice of claim was provided to the employer in the SIDES system with an e-mail alert on January 28, 2019. The notice of claim contains a warning that the employer protest response is due ten days from the initial notice date and gave a response deadline of February 8, 2019. The notice of claim was received in the designated inbox within ten days, but employer was unaware of the notice of claim as it had signed up to have notices of claim sent to a particular employee's email address and that employee left employment on December 28, 2018. Employer did not monitor the former employee's inbox or have the email forwarded to a box that was being monitored. By the middle of February 2019, employer realized it had not been receiving unemployment notifications. At that point, employer contacted Iowa Workforce Development and updated its contact information. It then learned of claimant's notice of claim and filed a protest on February 15, 2019.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes that employer has failed to protest within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.8(2) provides:

Notifying employing units of claims filed, requests for wage and separation information, and decisions made.

24.8(2) Responding by employing units to a notice of the filing of an initial claim or a request for wage and separation information and protesting the payment of benefits.

a. The employing unit which receives a Form 65-5317, Notice of Claim, or Form 68-0221, Request for Wage and Separation Information, must, within ten days of the date of the notice or request, submit to the department wage or separation information that affects the individual's rights to benefits, including any facts which disclose that the individual separated from employment voluntarily and without good cause attributable to the employer or was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment.

b. The employing unit may protest the payment of benefits if the protest is postmarked within ten days of the date of the notice of the filing of an initial claim. In the event that the tenth day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If the employing unit has filed a timely report of facts that might adversely affect the individual's benefit rights, the report shall be considered as a protest to the payment of benefits.

c. If the employing unit protests that the individual was not an employee and it is subsequently determined that the individual's name was changed, the employing unit shall be deemed to have not been properly notified and the employing unit shall again be provided the opportunity to respond to the notice of the filing of the initial claim.

d. The employing unit has the option of notifying the department under conditions which, in the opinion of the employing unit, may disqualify an individual from receiving benefits. The notification may be submitted electronically.

(1) The Notice of Separation, Form 60-0154, must be postmarked or received before or within ten days of the date that the Notice of Claim, Form 65-5317, was mailed to the employer. In the event that the tenth day falls on Saturday, Sunday or holiday, the protest period is extended to the next working day of the department. If a claim for unemployment insurance benefits has not been filed, the Notice of Separation may be accepted at any time.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

24.35(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

- a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.
- b. The division shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.
- c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case.
- d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

The administrative law judge concludes that the employer did receive notice of the claim at the email address it specified when it signed up to receive electronic notice of claims via the SIDES system and therefore was not deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert the protest in a timely manner. Although the email address to which the notice of claim was sent is affiliated with a former employee, the email account ultimately belongs to the employer. The employer did not take steps to monitor the inbox or forward email to another address that is monitored regularly. That was a business decision.

The delay was not due to any *Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service* pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-4.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the employer has failed to timely protest pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's termination of employment. See, *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990).

DECISION:

The February 19, 2019, (reference 01) decision is affirmed. Employer has failed to file a timely protest, and the decision of the representative shall stand and remain in full force and effect.

Christine A. Louis
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515)478-3528

Decision Dated and Mailed

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