

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

AMIE J WENTLAND
Claimant

OPTIMAE LIFESERVICES INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-22780-LJ-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/15/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quit from Employment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On October 11, 2021, claimant Amie J. Wentland filed an appeal from the June 17, 2021 (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based on a determination that claimant voluntarily quit her employment. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephonic hearing was held at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 8, 2021. Appeal numbers 21A-UI-22777-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22780-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22781-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22782-LJ-T, 21A-UI-22784-LJ-T, and 21A-UI-22785-LJ-T were heard together and created one record. The claimant, Amie J. Wentland, participated. The employer, Optimae Lifeservices, Inc., did not register a telephone number or appear for the hearing and did not participate. Department Exhibits D-1, D-2, and D-3 were received and admitted into the record. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

ISSUE:

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A decision finding claimant disqualified from receiving benefits based on her separation from employment was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on June 17, 2021. Claimant acknowledges receiving the decision. The first sentence of the decision states, "If this decision denies benefits and is not reversed on appeal, it may result in an overpayment which you will be required to repay." The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by June 27, 2021. The appeal was not filed until October 11, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the ineligibility decision.

A decision finding claimant ineligible for benefits based on her unavailability for work was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on July 8, 2021. Claimant acknowledges receiving the decision. The first sentence of the decision states, "If this decision denies benefits and is not reversed on appeal, it may result in an overpayment which you will be required to repay."

The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by July 18, 2021. The appeal was not filed until October 11, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the ineligibility decision.

Claimant recalls receiving both of the decisions adverse to her and understood that she had the ability to appeal both of the decisions. However, claimant opted not to appeal either decision. She did not fully understand the decisions, and she did not ask for assistance to understand the decisions or access the appeal process. Later, when claimant received the overpayment decisions, she filed an appeal on October 11 and that appeal was applied to the underlying adverse decisions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part: "[u]nless 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."

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(1) provides:

1. Except as otherwise provided by statute or by division rule, any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document submitted to the division shall be considered received by and filed with the division:

(a) If transmitted via the United States Postal Service 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 is 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.

(b) If transmitted via the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES), maintained by the United States Department of Labor, on the date it was submitted to SIDES.

(c) If transmitted by any means other than [United States Postal Service or the State Identification Data Exchange System (SIDES)], on the date it is received by the division.

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

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.

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).

Here, the claimant received the decision in the mail and, therefore, had an opportunity to file an appeal prior to the appeal deadline. While the administrative law judge is sympathetic to claimant's situation, she knew she had the right to appeal and chose not to appeal or to call or visit the local office to ask for assistance. Claimant's delay was not due to an error or misinformation from the Department or due to delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. No other good cause reason has been established for the delay. Claimant's appeal was not filed on time and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction (authority) to decide the other issue in this matter.

DECISION:

The June 17, 2021, (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



Elizabeth A. Johnson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau

December 15, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

lj/lj