

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

BRANDON ROSS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-02158-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OMEGA CABINETS
Employer

**OC: 01/28/07 R: 03
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Brandon Ross (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated February 21, 2007, reference 01, which held that he was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from Omega Cabinets Limited (employer) for work-related misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on March 20, 2007. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer did not comply with the hearing notice instructions and did not call in to provide a telephone number at which a representative could be contacted, and therefore, did not participate. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the party, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-related misconduct?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed as a full-time woodworker from August 29, 2005 through January 12, 2007 when he was discharged for testing positive for marijuana. He was sent to the hospital after putting a nail in his hand at work and was tested for drugs pursuant to the employer's written drug policy. The claimant admitted he was using marijuana and knew his drug test would be "dirty".

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

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 to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The claimant tested positive for marijuana in a post-accident drug test. He admitted he used marijuana and knew he would test positive. Work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has been established in this case and benefits are denied.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated February 21, 2007, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, because he was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/kjw