

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**WALTER BICKHAM**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 13A-UI-05521-ET**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**WESTAR FOODS INC**  
Employer

**OC: 04/07/13**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2R)**

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Leaving  
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed a timely appeal from the April 29, 2013, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on June 17, 2013. The claimant participated in the hearing. Dan Kenne, District Manager; Brook Nortman, Shift Manager; and Jeff Oswald, Employer Representative, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant voluntarily left his employment for good cause attributable to the employer.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a part-time crew member for Hardees from April 18, 2012 to June 23, 2012. The claimant acknowledged being incarcerated during scheduled workdays and a total of six or seven months after he was arrested for driving while his license was barred. Due to the incarceration, the employer may reasonably consider the absences, reported or unreported, a voluntary leaving of employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

871 IAC 24.25(16) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(16) The claimant is deemed to have left if such claimant becomes incarcerated.

The claimant has the burden of proving that the voluntary leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code section 96.6(2) (amended 1998).

The claimant's incarceration on multiple scheduled workdays was not a good-cause reason attributable to the employer for leaving. The employer's attribution of the absences as a voluntary leaving of employment was reasonable as it is not expected to hold employment for incarcerated employees. Therefore, benefits must be denied.

The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code section 96.3-7. In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code section 96.3-7-b is remanded to the Agency.

**DECISION:**

The April 29, 2013, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code section 96.3-7-b is remanded to the Agency.

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Julie Elder  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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