

**IN THE IOWA ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

MUNA C DENNIS
Claimant

CARE INITIATIVES
Employer

APPEAL 25A-UI-02023-JT-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**OC: 02/16/25
Claimant: Appellant (6)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)(a) & (d) – Discharge for Misconduct
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Muna Dennis (claimant) appealed the Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) March 4, 2025 (reference 01) decision. The decision disqualified the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits and held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the IWD deputy's conclusion the claimant was discharged on December 26, 2024 for violation of a known company rule.

On March 13, 2025, Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing (DIAL) UI Appeals Bureau mailed a notice of hearing to the parties at their last-known address of record for a telephone hearing set for 8:00 a.m. on April 1, 2025. The claimant did not comply with the hearing notice instructions to call the toll-free number at the time of the hearing and did not participate in the appeal hearing. The employer's third-party representative, Lesley Buhler of Equifax, was available for the hearing but no employer witnesses appeared for the hearing. Based on the claimant/appellant's failure to participate in the hearing, the administrative law judge did not hold a hearing.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal should be dismissed based on the claimant/appellant's failure to appear for and participate in the appeal hearing.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Muna Dennis (claimant) is the appellant in this matter. DIAL UI Appeals Bureau properly notified the claimant of the scheduled appeal hearing. The administrative law judge was available for the hearing as scheduled. The claimant did not appear for or participate in the appeal hearing. The claimant did not request a postponement of the hearing. The claimant did not appear before the record closed 15 minutes after the scheduled start of the hearing. The administrative law judge did not hold a hearing because the claimant did not appear.

The March 4, 2025 (reference 01) decision disqualified the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits and held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant was discharged on December 26, 2024 for violation of a known company rule.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides, in relevant part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-26.13(6) (effective 1/29/25) provides as follows:

If a party fails to appear for the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing or decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). If no decision has been issued, the absent party may make a written request to reopen the record for good cause as defined in subrule 26.7(3). The presiding officer may reopen the record for additional material, relevant and nonrepetitious evidence not submitted at the case hearing.

- a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.
- b. If an absent party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party that has participated is no longer on the telephone line or present, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party and the party may file a written request to reopen the record.
- c. Once a decision has been entered, the absent party may file an appeal to the employment appeal board to request a new hearing.

Due process requires notice and an opportunity to be heard, both of which were provided to the party/parties. The appellant is responsible for going forward with the case in a prompt and thoughtful manner. The hearing notice instructs the party/parties to call the toll-free number listed on hearing notice at the time the hearing is scheduled to begin. The appellant must be present at the start of the hearing to avoid a default judgment.

The claimant/appellant did not call in for the hearing and is in default. The appeal is dismissed. The IWD unemployment insurance decision remains in effect.

DECISION:

The claimant defaulted on the appeal. The appeal is DISMISSED. The March 4, 2025 (reference 01) decision remains in effect. That decision disqualified the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits and held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant was discharged on December 26, 2024 for violation of a known company rule.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James E. Timberland".

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

April 1, 2025
Decision Dated and Mailed

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APPEAL RIGHTS. If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board
6200 Park Ave Suite 100
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Fax: (515)281-7191
Online: eab.iowa.gov**

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL STATE CLEARLY:

- 1) The name, address, and social security number of the claimant.
- 2) A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
- 3) That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
- 4) The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

Note to Parties: YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds.

Note to Claimant: It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN. Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board
6200 Park Ave Suite 100
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Fax: (515)281-7191
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que está en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

Nota para las partes: USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

Nota para el reclamante: es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.