

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

URDANE L HARRIS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 21A-UI-22733-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

KRAFT HEINZ FOODS COMPANY LLC
Employer

OC: 02/07/21
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code Section 96.5(2) - Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Urdane Harris, filed a late appeal from the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision that disqualified him for benefits and that held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged on January 25, 2021 for violation of a known company rule. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 7, 2021. Claimant participated. The employer did not comply with the hearing notice instructions to call the designated toll-free number at the start of the hearing and did not participate. There were three appeal numbers set for a consolidated hearing: 21A-UI-22733-JTT, 21A-UI-22735-JTT and 21A-UI-22736-JTT. Exhibits A and B were received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the following Agency administrative records: DBRO, KPYX, NMRO and the reference 02, 03 and 04 decisions.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On April 12, 2021, Iowa Workforce Development mailed the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision to the claimant's Moline, Illinois last-known address of record. The reference 02 decision disqualified the claimant for benefits and held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged from his employment at Kraft Heinz foods Company, L.L.C. on January 25, 2021 for violation of a known company rule. The reference 02 decision stated the decision would become final unless an appeal from the decision was postmarked by April 22, 2021 or was received by the Appeal Section by that date. The claimant received the decision in a timely manner, prior to the appeal deadline. The claimant read far enough into the decision to see that it was a denial of benefits. The claimant did not note the appeal deadline information. The claimant did not take any steps to file an appeal by the appeal deadline. The claimant subsequently returned to work with the same employer and took no further action on the matter until he received two related overpayment decisions that were mailed to him on October 1, 2021. On October 12, 2021, the

claimant had an attorney fax appeals from the overpayment decisions to the Appeals Bureau. The Appeals Bureau received the appeals on October 12, 2021 and treated them as appeals also from the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

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. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless 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. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed 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 was 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. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(a). See also *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(b).

The evidence in the record establishes that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. 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). One question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

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. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2)(c).

The evidence in the record establishes an untimely appeal from the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision. The claimant received the decision in a timely manner, had a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal by the applicable deadline, but unreasonably delayed filing the appeal until October 12, 2021. The failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Iowa Workforce Development error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. There is not good cause to treat the late appeal as a timely appeal. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2). Because the appeal was untimely, the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The claimant's appeal from the April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision was untimely. The decision is affirmed. The April 12, 2021, reference 02, decision that disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged on January 25, 2021 for violation of a known company rule, remains in effect.



James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

January 10, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/mh

Note to Claimant: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.