

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

SHAWNA SHETTLER
Claimant

HENRY COUNTY
Employer

APPEAL 20A-UI-00902-S1-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**OC: 12/29/19
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 - Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code § 96.3-7 – Overpayment
871 IAC 24.10 – Employer Participation in the Fact-Finding Interview

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Henry County (employer) appealed a representative's January 24, 2020, decision (reference 01) that concluded Shawna Shettler (claimant) was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on February 17, 2020. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Richard McNamee, Sheriff. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

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 hired on November 15, 2017, as a full-time jailer. The county opened a new jail and the claimant questioned security measures. In early December 2019, she met with the sheriff to discuss security issues. The sheriff thanked her for the information and told her that he heard her.

A week later the claimant talked to an administrator about being overworked and not being able to take breaks and lunches. The administrator showed her the break policies. The claimant was instructed to take the breaks outlined in the policies. If she had an issue, she should follow the grievance policy.

On December 22, 2019, the claimant submitted a written resignation effective January 2, 2020. She took forty hours of vacation from December 23, 2019, to January 1, 2020. On January 2, 2020, the claimant returned the employer's items. The claimant quit work because she did not like her work environment. Continued work was available for the claimant had she not quit work.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of December 29, 2019, and received no unemployment insurance benefits after the separation from employment. The employer participated personally at the fact finding interview on January 21, 2020, by Richard McNamee.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily quit work without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.25(21) 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:

(21) The claimant left because of dissatisfaction with the work environment.

A voluntary leaving of employment requires an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act of carrying out that intention. *Local Lodge #1426 v. Wilson Trailer*, 289 N.W.2d 608, 612 (Iowa 1980). The claimant's intention to voluntarily leave work was evidenced by words and actions. When employees quit work because of dissatisfaction with the work environment, their leaving is without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant left work because she did not like her work environment. Her leaving was without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are denied.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)“b” as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The claimant has not received any unemployment insurance benefits. The employer participated personally in the fact finding interview and is not chargeable.

DECISION:

The representative's January 24, 2020, decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

The claimant has not received any unemployment insurance benefits. The employer participated personally in the fact finding interview and is not chargeable.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/scn