

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ALINA C FAJARDO
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 06A-UI-08422-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

INTERBAKE FOODS INC
Employer

OC: 03/05/06 R: 01
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.4-3 - Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated August 15, 2006, reference 03, which held claimant not able and available for work. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on September 7, 2006. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by John Kreber, Assistant Human Resource Manager.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was given a ten pound lifting restriction July 12, 2006 due to pregnancy-related complications. The restriction will not be lifted until claimant gives birth. Employer could not accommodate the restriction on a continuing basis as work assignments are the result of seniority. Employer could accommodate a work restriction of 20 to 30 pounds. Claimant could not obtain such a work restriction from her doctor.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.4-3 provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept

suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

871 IAC 24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

871 IAC 24.23(35) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a physician and has not been released as being able to work.

Inasmuch as the pregnancy work restriction was not work-related and the treating physician has not released the claimant to return to work, the claimant has not established the ability to work. Benefits are withheld until such time as the claimant obtains a full medical release to return to work. Benefits shall be withheld effective July 16, 2006.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated August 15 2006, reference 03 is affirmed. Claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, effective July 16, 2006.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/cs