

- DECISION -

Claimant:
MARKEYA N MCCRAY

Decision No.: 6063-BR-11

Date: October 17, 2011

Appeal No.: 1127015

S.S. No.:

Employer:
JOHNS HOPKINS MEDCL MNGMT CORP

L.O. No.: 64

Appellant: Claimant

Issue: Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct or gross misconduct connected with the work within the meaning of Maryland Code, Labor and Employment Article, Title 8, Section 8-1002 or 1003.

- NOTICE OF RIGHT OF APPEAL TO COURT -

You may file an appeal from this decision in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City or one of the Circuit Courts in a county in Maryland. The court rules about how to file the appeal can be found in many public libraries, in the Maryland Rules of Procedure, Title 7, Chapter 200.

The period for filing an appeal expires: November 16, 2011

REVIEW ON THE RECORD

After a review on the record, and after deleting "or about" from the sixth sentence of the second paragraph, the Board adopts the hearing examiner's modified findings of fact. However, the Board concludes that these facts warrant different conclusions of law and a reversal of the hearing examiner's decision.

The General Assembly declared that, in its considered judgment, the public good and the general welfare of the citizens of the State required the enactment of the Unemployment Insurance Law, under the police powers of the State, for the compulsory setting aside of unemployment reserves to be used for the benefit

of individuals unemployed through no fault of their own. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-102(c)*. Unemployment compensation laws are to be read liberally in favor of eligibility, and disqualification provisions are to be strictly construed. *Sinai Hosp. of Baltimore v. Dept. of Empl. & Training, 309 Md. 28 (1987)*.

The Board reviews the record *de novo* and may affirm, modify, or reverse the findings of fact or conclusions of law of the hearing examiner on the basis of evidence submitted to the hearing examiner, or evidence that the Board may direct to be taken, or may remand any case to a hearing examiner for purposes it may direct. *Md. Code Ann., Lab. & Empl. Art., § 8-510(d)*; *COMAR 09.32.06.04*. The Board fully inquires into the facts of each particular case. *COMAR 09.32.06.02(E)*.

In a discharge case, the employer has the burden of demonstrating that the claimant's actions rise to the level of misconduct, gross misconduct or aggravated misconduct based upon a preponderance of the credible evidence in the record. *Hartman v. Polystyrene Products Co., Inc., 164-BH-83*; *Ward v. Maryland Permalite, Inc., 30-BR-85*; *Weimer v. Dept. of Transportation, 869-BH-87*; *Scruggs v. Division of Correction, 347-BH-89*; *Ivey v. Catterton Printing Co., 441-BH-89*.

As the Court of Appeals explained in *Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation v. Hider, 349 Md. 71, 82, 706 A.2d 1073 (1998)*, "in enacting the unemployment compensation program, the legislature created a graduated, three-tiered system of disqualifications from benefits based on employee misconduct. The severity of the disqualification increases in proportion to the seriousness of the misconduct."

Dept. of Labor, Licensing & Regulation v. Boardley, 164 Md. 404, 408 fn.1 (2005).

Section 8-1002 of the Labor and Employment Article defines gross misconduct as conduct of an employee that is a deliberate and willful disregard of standards of behavior that an employing unit rightfully expects and that shows gross indifference to the interests of the employing unit or repeated violations of employment rules that prove a regular and wanton disregard of the employee's obligations.

The term "misconduct" as used in the statute means a transgression of some established rule or policy of the employer, the commission of a forbidden act, a dereliction from duty, or a course of wrongful conduct committed by an employee within the scope of his employment relationship, during hours of employment or on the employer's premises, within the meaning of Section 8-1003 of the Labor and Employment Article. (See, *Rogers v. Radio Shack, 271 Md. 126, 314 A.2d 113*).

Simple misconduct within the meaning of § 8-1003 does not require intentional misbehavior. *DLLR v. Hider, 349 Md. 71 (1998)*. Misconduct must be connected with the work; the mere fact that misconduct adversely affects the employer's interests is not enough. *Fino v. Maryland Emp. Sec. Bd., 218 Md. 504 (1959)*. Although not sufficient in itself, a breach of duty to an employer is an essential element to make an act connected with the work. *Empl. Sec. Bd. v. LeCates, 218 Md. 202 (1958)*. Misconduct, however, need not occur during the hours of employment or the employer's premises. *Id.*

Without sufficient evidence of a willful and wanton disregard of an employee's obligations or gross indifference to the employer's interests, there can be no finding of gross misconduct. *Lehman v. Baker Protective Services, Inc.*, 221-BR-89. Where a showing of gross misconduct is based on a single action, the employer must show the employee demonstrated gross indifference to the employer's interests. *DLLR v. Muddiman*, 120 Md. App. 725, 737 (1998).

In determining whether an employee has committed gross misconduct, "[t]he important element to be considered is the nature of the misconduct and how seriously it affects the claimant's employment or the employer's rights." *Dept. of Econ. & Empl. Dev. v. Jones*, 79 Md. App. 531, 536 (1989). "It is also proper to note that what is 'deliberate and willful misconduct' will vary with each particular case. Here we 'are not looking simply for substandard conduct...but for a willful or wanton state of mind accompanying the engaging in substandard conduct.'" *Employment Sec. Bd. v. LeCates*, 218 Md. 202, 207 (1958)(internal citation omitted); also see *Hernandez v. DLLR*, 122 Md. App. 19, 25 (1998).

The employer did not appear and therefore did not sufficiently demonstrate that the claimant's actions were more than a mere isolated incident. See *Proctor v. Atlas Pontiac*, 144-BR-87 (An instantaneous lapse in the performance of job duties does not constitute misconduct); also see *Gilbert v. Polo Grill*, 192-BH-91 (One slight lapse in the claimant's performance is insufficient to support a finding of misconduct). In the light most favorable to the employer, the claimant failed to use good judgment by not notifying the employer of his physical condition and requesting a replacement. Failing to use good judgment, or an isolated case of ordinary negligence, in the absence of a showing of culpable negligence or deliberate action in disregard of the employer's interests is insufficient to prove misconduct. *Hider v. DLLR*, 115 Md. App. 258, 281 (1997); *Greenwood v. Royal Crown Bottling Company*, 793-BR-88.

The Board finds that this single isolated incident of failing to report for work, or notify the employer of her absence, does not rise to the level of misconduct. In this case, the claimant overslept, unintentionally. She could not call the employer to notify them of her absence because she did not have telephone service available to her. She did not have enough money to get to, or to use, a pay telephone and did not know anyone from whom she could borrow a telephone. The Board notes that, even if the claimant could have called the employer, she would have been in violation of the employer's policy requiring a three-hour notice of an intended absence. The claimant's prior warnings for attendance issues concerned what the employer classified as excessive absences and were unrelated to this incident of the claimant's failure to report or call.

In her appeal, the claimant makes contentions concerning her need for benefits. The claimant's need is not determinative of an award of benefits. Unemployment benefits are paid to claimants who are qualified and eligible. The Board finds that the claimant is qualified for benefits based upon its conclusion that her separation from this employment was a discharge for reasons other than misconduct. If the claimant is otherwise eligible, based upon her compliance with the other Agency requirements, she could be entitled to benefits for the weeks claimed.

The Board notes that the hearing examiner did not offer or admit the *Agency Fact Finding Report* into evidence. The Board did not consider this document when rendering its decision.

The Board finds based on a preponderance of the credible evidence that the employer has not met its burden of demonstrating that the claimant's actions rose to the level of gross misconduct within the meaning of § 8-1002. The employer has also not met its burden of showing that the claimant's discharge was for misconduct within the meaning of § 8-1003. The decision shall be reversed for the reasons stated herein.

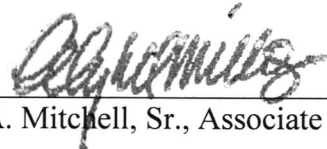
DECISION

It is held that the claimant was discharged, but not for gross misconduct or misconduct connected with the work, within the meaning of Maryland Code Annotated, Labor and Employment Article, Title 8, Section 1002 or 1003. No disqualification is imposed based upon the claimant's separation from employment with JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICAL MANAGEMENT CORP.

The Hearing Examiner's decision is reversed.



Donna Watts-Lamont, Chairperson



Clayton A. Mitchell, Sr., Associate Member

RD

Copies mailed to:

MARKEYA N. MCCRAY

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDCL MNGMT CORP

Susan Bass, Office of the Assistant Secretary

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS DECISION

MARKEYA N MCCRAY

SSN #

Claimant

vs.

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDCL MNGMT CORP

Employer/Agency

Before the:

**Maryland Department of Labor,
Licensing and Regulation**

Division of Appeals

1100 North Eutaw Street

Room 511

Baltimore, MD 21201

(410) 767-2421

Appeal Number: 1127015

Appellant: Claimant

Local Office : 64 / BALTOMETRO
CALL CENTER

August 25, 2011

For the Claimant: PRESENT

For the Employer:

For the Agency:

ISSUE(S)

Whether the claimant's separation from this employment was for a disqualifying reason within the meaning of the MD. Code Annotated Labor and Employment Article, Title 8, Sections 1002 - 1002.1 (Gross/Aggravated Misconduct connected with the work), 1003 (Misconduct connected with the work) or 1001 (Voluntary Quit for good cause).

FINDINGS OF FACT

The claimant, Markeya Mccray, filed a claim for benefits establishing a benefit year beginning June 19, 2011. She qualified for a weekly benefit amount of \$104.00.

The claimant was employed as a part time companion for Johns Hopkins Medical Management Corporation. The claimant worked for this employer from January 2010, to May 7, 2011. The claimant's wage at the time of separation from this employment was \$9.50 per hour. The claimant was discharged from this employment for an isolated incident of failing to report to work without notice to the employer. The claimant was aware that the employer's policy requires employees to give the employer 3 hours advance notice of an absence. On or about May 24, 2011, the claimant was scheduled to report to work at 7:00 a.m. The claimant did not report to work however because she had overslept. The claimant did not notify the employer of her absence because she could not make any outgoing calls on her cell phone due to lack of payment. The claimant made no other arrangements to notify the employer of her absence such as

using a pay phone or visiting the employer's premises, which was within walking distance of the claimant's home. The employer terminated the claimant later that same day. The claimant had been previously placed on probation by the employer for attendance issues in May of 2010.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1003 provides for a disqualification from benefits where the claimant is discharged or suspended as a disciplinary measure for misconduct connected with the work. The term "misconduct" is undefined in the statute but has been defined as "...a transgression of some established rule or policy of the employer, the commission of a forbidden act, a dereliction of duty, or a course of wrongful conduct committed by an employee, within the scope of his employment relationship, during hours of employment, or on the employer's premises." Rogers v. Radio Shack, 271 Md. 126, 132 (1974).

EVALUATION OF EVIDENCE

The Hearing Examiner considered all of the testimony and evidence of record in reaching this decision. Where the evidence was in conflict, the Hearing Examiner decided the facts on the credible evidence as determined by the Hearing Examiner.

The employer had the burden to show, by a preponderance of the credible evidence, that the claimant was discharged for some degree of misconduct connected with the work within the meaning of the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Law. Ivey v. Catterton Printing Company, 441-BH-89. In the case at bar, that burden has been met.

Although duly notified, the employer failed to be present at the hearing to provide testimony in this matter. The credible testimony presented at the hearing indicates that the claimant was discharged from this employment for an isolated incident of failing to report to work without notice to the employer. The claimant admitted that she did not report to work on May 24, 2011, as she had overslept. The claimant also admitted that she did not report her absence to the employer as required due to telephone issues resulting from the claimant's failure to pay her bill.

Accordingly, I hold that the claimant committed a transgression of some established rule or policy of the employer, a forbidden act, a dereliction of duty, or engaged in a course of wrongful conduct within the scope of the claimant's employment relationship, during hours of employment, or on the employer's premises. An unemployment disqualification shall be imposed based on Md. Code, Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1003 pursuant to this separation from this employment.

DECISION

IT IS HELD THAT the claimant was discharged for misconduct connected with the work within the meaning of Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emp. Article, Section 8-1003. Benefits are denied for the week beginning May 1, 2011, and for the 14 weeks immediately following. The claimant will then be eligible for benefits so long as all other eligibility requirements are met. The claimant may contact Claimant Information Service concerning the other eligibility requirements of the law at ui@dllr.state.md.us or call 410-949-0022 from the Baltimore region, or 1-800-827-4839 from outside the Baltimore area. Deaf claimants with TTY may contact Client Information Service at 410-767-2727, or outside the Baltimore area at 1-800-827-4400.

The determination of the Claims Specialist is reversed.

R. M. Liberatore, Esq.

R. M. Liberatore, Esq.
Hearing Examiner

Notice of Right to Request Waiver of Overpayment

The Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation may seek recovery of any overpayment received by the Claimant. Pursuant to Section 8-809 of the Labor and Employment Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, and Code of Maryland Regulations 09.32.07.01 through 09.32.07.09, the Claimant has a right to request a waiver of recovery of this overpayment. This request may be made by contacting Overpayment Recoveries Unit at 410-767-2404. If this request is made, the Claimant is entitled to a hearing on this issue.

A request for waiver of recovery of overpayment does not act as an appeal of this decision.

Esto es un documento legal importante que decide si usted recibirá los beneficios del seguro del desempleo. Si usted disiente de lo que fue decidido, usted tiene un tiempo limitado a apelar esta decisión. Si usted no entiende cómo apelar, usted puede contactar (301) 313-8000 para una explicación.

Notice of Right of Further Appeal

Any party may request a further appeal either in person, by facsimile or by mail with the Board of Appeals. Under COMAR 09.32.06.01A(1) appeals may not be filed by e-mail. Your appeal must be filed by September 09, 2011. You may file your request for further appeal in person at or by mail to the following address:

Board of Appeals
1100 North Eutaw Street
Room 515
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Fax 410-767-2787
Phone 410-767-2781

NOTE: Appeals filed by mail are considered timely on the date of the U.S. Postal Service postmark.

Date of hearing : August 15,2011

TH/Specialist ID: RBA15

Seq No: 001

Copies mailed on August 25, 2011 to:

MARKEYA N. MCCRAY

JOHNS HOPKINS MEDCL MNGMT CORP

LOCAL OFFICE #64