

STATE OF FLORIDA
REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE APPEALS COMMISSION

In the matter of:

Claimant/Appellant

R.A.A.C. Order No. 15-01227

vs.

Referee Decision No. 0024140386-03U

Employer/Appellee

ORDER OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE APPEALS COMMISSION

This case comes before the Commission for disposition of an appeal of the decision of a reemployment assistance appeals referee pursuant to Section 443.151(4)(c), Florida Statutes. The referee's decision stated that a request for review should specify any and all allegations of error with respect to the referee's decision, and that allegations of error not specifically set forth in the request for review may be considered waived.

Upon appeal of an examiner's determination, a referee schedules a hearing. Parties are advised prior to the hearing that the hearing is their only opportunity to present all of their evidence in support of their case. The appeals referee has responsibility to develop the hearing record, weigh the evidence, resolve conflicts in the evidence, and render a decision supported by competent, substantial evidence. Section 443.151(4)(b)5., Florida Statutes, provides that any part of the evidence may be received in written form, and all testimony of parties and witnesses shall be made under oath. Irrelevant, immaterial, or unduly repetitious evidence shall be excluded, but all other evidence of a type commonly relied upon by reasonably prudent persons in the conduct of their affairs is admissible, whether or not such evidence would be admissible in a trial in state court. Hearsay evidence may be used for the purpose of supplementing or explaining other evidence, or to support a finding if it would be admissible over objection in civil actions. Notwithstanding Section 120.57(1)(c), Florida Statutes, hearsay evidence may support a finding of fact if the party against whom it is offered has a reasonable opportunity to review such evidence prior to the hearing and the appeals referee or special deputy determines, after considering all relevant facts and circumstances, that the evidence is trustworthy and probative and that the interests of justice are best served by its admission into evidence.

By law, the Commission's review is limited to those matters that were presented to the referee and are contained in the official record. A decision of an appeals referee cannot be overturned by the Commission if the referee's material findings are supported by competent, substantial evidence and the decision comports with the legal standards established by the Florida Legislature. The Commission cannot reweigh the evidence or consider additional evidence that a party could have reasonably been expected to present to the referee during the hearing. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the appeals referee to judge the credibility of the witnesses and to resolve conflicts in evidence, including testimonial evidence. Absent extraordinary circumstances, the Commission cannot substitute its judgment and overturn a referee's conflict resolution.

Having considered all arguments raised on appeal and having reviewed the hearing record, the Commission concludes no basis exists to reopen or remand the case for further proceedings. The Commission concludes the record adequately supports the referee's material findings and the referee's conclusion is a correct application of the pertinent laws to the material facts of the case.

The record reflects the claimant was discharged as a result of being discovered sleeping during her shift. The client company's director of nursing testified that she discovered the claimant asleep on a sofa at approximately 3:00 AM when she performed a routine audit. She observed the claimant was sound asleep and snoring. She had her shoes off and had covered herself with a blanket. The director of nursing testified that she tapped the claimant and called her name but the claimant remained asleep. The director of nursing testified that she finally woke the claimant by tapping her harder and shaking her.

The claimant denied being asleep or covering herself with a blanket and lying down on the client company's couch. The employer's believed evidence, however, is sufficient to support a finding that the claimant was asleep. Further, the evidence is sufficient to establish that the claimant deliberately placed herself in the position in which she was discovered. Given the fact that the claimant denied that she was asleep, covered with a blanket, or lying on a couch, the claimant failed to offer any mitigating evidence sufficiently explaining her conduct. The claimant was the lead medical technician on duty the night of the final incident, and the director of nursing testified that, based on her considerable efforts to wake the claimant, the claimant would not have been able to hear a pager she carried to alert her if a resident needed assistance. The employer's policy, which provides that sleeping on the job is grounds for immediate termination, was marked and entered as a hearing exhibit. Under the circumstances present in this case, the Commission concludes the referee correctly held the claimant's sleeping in the final incident demonstrated a conscious

disregard of the employer's interests and a deliberate disregard of the reasonable standards of behavior which the employer has a right to expect, and constitutes misconduct pursuant to Section 443.036(29)(a), Florida Statutes. Additionally, the record reflects the claimant's actions violated the employer's policy, and constitute misconduct under Section 443.036(29)(e), Florida Statutes. Consequently, the claimant is disqualified from receipt of benefits.

The referee's decision is affirmed.

It is so ordered.

REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE APPEALS COMMISSION

Frank E. Brown, Chairman
Thomas D. Epsky, Member
Joseph D. Finnegan, Member

This is to certify that on

7/29/2015 ,

the above Order was filed in the office of the Clerk of the Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission, and a copy mailed to the last known address of each interested party.

By: Mary Griffin
Deputy Clerk



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
PO BOX 5250
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32314 5250



*40115948 *

Docket No.0024 1403 86-03

Jurisdiction: §443.151(4)(a)&(b) Florida Statutes

CLAIMANT/Appellee

EMPLOYER/Appellant

APPEARANCES

Claimant

Employer

DECISION OF APPEALS REFEREE

Important appeal rights are explained at the end of this decision.

Derechos de apelación importantes son explicados al final de esta decisión.

Yo eksplike kèk dwa dapèl enpòtan lan fen desizyon sa a.

CHARGES TO EMPLOYER'S EMPLOYMENT RECORD: Whether benefit payments made to the claimant will be charged to the employment record of the employer, pursuant to Sections 443.101(9); 443.131(3)(a), Florida Statutes; Rules 73B-10.026; 11.018, Florida Administrative Code. (If charges are not at issue on the current claim, the hearing may determine charges on a subsequent claim.)

Issues Involved: **TIMELINESS:** Whether an appeal, request for reconsideration, or request to reopen an appeal was filed within twenty days after mailing of the determination or decision to the adversely affected party's address of record or, in the absence of mailing, within twenty days after delivery, pursuant to Sections 443.151(3); 443.151(4)(b)1., Florida Statutes; Rules 73B-10.022(1); 10.022(5); 10.023(1); 11.017(2); 20.002-007, Florida Administrative Code.

SEPARATION: Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct connected with work or voluntarily left work without good cause as defined in the statute, pursuant to Sections 443.101(1), (9), (10), (11), (13); 443.036(29), Florida Statutes; Rule 73B-11.020, Florida Administrative Code.

NON-APPEARANCE: Whether there is good cause for proceeding with an additional hearing, pursuant to Florida Administrative Code Rules 73B-20.016; 20.017.

Jurisdictional (Non-appearance):The employer appealed the determination mailed on October 30, 2015. The hearing was scheduled for February 3, 2015. The notice of hearing was mailed to both parties address of record on January 21, 2015. The employer did not appear for the hearing. The referee dismissed the employer's appeal and rendered the decision on February 5, 2015. The employer requested re hearing. The new hearing was scheduled for March 5, 2014. Both parties appeared for the hearing. At the new hearing the employer's representative was the senior unemployment hearings representative and custodian of records. The representative stated that she received the notice on February 11, 2015.

A case will be re opened for a hearing on the merits when a party requests a reopening within 20 days of rendition of the decision and establishes good cause for not attending a previous hearing. If good cause is not established, the previous decision will be reinstated. The employer had good cause for the non appearance when the employer was not duly noticed of the hearing.

The case was reopened.

Jurisdictional (Timeliness):The employer timely received the notice of approval which was distributed by the Department on October 30, 2014, to the employer's address of record.

The employer's representative appealed the notice on November 19, 2014.

The law provides that a determination is final unless an adversely affected party files an appeal or request for reconsideration within twenty days after the mailing date of the determination notice to the party's last known address or, in lieu of mailing, within twenty days after delivery of the notice.

The employer's appeal was timely filed.

Findings of Fact:The instant employer was . The claimant began work as a lead med technician for the employer's client company, , an assisted living facility on May 16, 2014. The client company retained the right to hire and discharge leased employees. The claimant reported to the client company's director of nursing (DON). The

claimant attended both the client company new hire orientation on August 8, 2014; and the staff meeting on September 10, 2014, to discuss the client company policies. The claimant was aware of the policies. On September 26, 2014, during the claimant's scheduled work shift the DON made an unannounced but regular audit of the work shift operations and the call light usage. The DON observed the claimant for several minutes while the claimant was on the couch, supine, covered with a blanket with her eyes closed asleep. The DON tapped the claimant, who appeared startled, and then the claimant told the DON, "I had a migraine." On September 30, 2014, the DON, the executive director, and the human resources person discharged the claimant for sleeping while on duty.

Conclusion of Law:As of May 17, 2013, the Reemployment Assistance Law of Florida defines misconduct connected with work as, but is not limited to, the following, which may not be construed in pari materia with each other:

- a. Conduct demonstrating conscious disregard of an employer's interests and found to be a deliberate violation or disregard of the reasonable standards of behavior which the employer expects of his or her employee. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, willful damage to an employer's property that results in damage of more than \$50; theft of employer property or property of a customer or invitee of the employer.
- b. Carelessness or negligence to a degree or recurrence that manifests culpability, or wrongful intent, or shows an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interest or of the employee's duties and obligations to his or her employer.
- c. Chronic absenteeism or tardiness in deliberate violation of a known policy of the employer or one or more unapproved absences following a written reprimand or warning relating to more than one unapproved absence.
- d. A willful and deliberate violation of a standard or regulation of this state by an employee of an employer licensed or certified by this state, which violation would cause the employer to be sanctioned or have its license or certification suspended by this state.
- e. 1. A violation of an employer's rule, unless the claimant can demonstrate that:
 - a. He or she did not know, and could not reasonably know, of the rule's requirements;
 - b. The rule is not lawful or not reasonably related to the job environment and performance; or
 - c. The rule is not fairly or consistently enforced.
2. Such conduct may include, but is not limited to, committing criminal assault or battery on another employee, or on a customer or invitee of the employer; or committing abuse or neglect of a patient, resident, disabled person, elderly person, or child in her or his professional care.

The record shows the employer discharged the claimant. The burden of proving misconduct is on the employer. *Lewis v. Unemployment Appeals Commission*, 498 So.2d 608 (Fla. 5th DCA 1986). The proof must be by a preponderance of competent substantial evidence. *De Groot v. Sheffield*, 95 So.2d 912 (Fla. 1957); *Tallahassee Housing Authority v. Unemployment Appeals Commission*, 483 So.2d 413 (Fla. 1986). The testimony shows the claimant was discharged for sleeping while on duty. The employer's witness was the DON. The DON's testimony, and the evidence in this case, shows she found the claimant was sleeping while on duty. The claimant's testimony shows she was sleeping while on duty because of a migraine. The claimant's conduct demonstrated a conscious disregard of the employer's interests and is found to be a deliberate disregard of the reasonable standards of behavior which the employer had a right to expect.

The hearing officer was presented with conflicting testimony regarding material issues of fact and is charged with resolving these conflicts. In Order Number 2003 10946 (December 9, 2003), the Commission set forth factors to be considered in resolving credibility questions. These factors include the witness' opportunity and capacity to observe the event or act in question; any prior inconsistent statement by the witness; witness bias or lack of bias; the contradiction of the witness' version of events by other evidence or its consistency with other evidence; the inherent improbability of the witness' version of events; and the witness' demeanor. Upon considering these factors, the hearing officer finds the testimony of the employer to be more credible. Therefore, material conflicts in the evidence are resolved in favor of the employer.

The law provides that benefits will not be charged to the employment record of a contributory employer who furnishes required notice to the Department when the claimant left the work without good cause attributable to the employer, was discharged for misconduct connected with the work, refused without good cause an offer of suitable work from the employer, was discharged from work for violating any criminal law punishable by imprisonment or for any dishonest act in connection with the work, refused an offer of suitable work because of the distance to the employment due to a change of residence by the claimant, became separated as a direct result of a natural disaster declared pursuant to the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 and the Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Amendments of 1988, or was discharged for unsatisfactory performance during an initial probationary period that did not exceed ninety calendar days and of which the claimant was informed during the first seven days of work. Since the employer discharged the claimant for misconduct connected with work, the employer's account will not be charged.

Decision: REVERSED. The claimant is disqualified from September 28, 2014, and for the five immediately following weeks through the week ended November 1, 2014, and until she earns \$3,927. The employer's account will not be charged.

If this decision disqualifies and/or holds the claimant ineligible for benefits already received, the claimant will be required to repay those benefits. The specific amount of any overpayment will be calculated by the department and set forth in a separate overpayment determination, unless specified in this decision. However, the time to request review of this decision is as shown above and is not stopped, delayed or extended by any other determination, decision or order.

This is to certify that a copy of the above decision was distributed/mailed to the last known address of each interested party on March 13, 2015.

E. LOSCHI
Appeals Referee

By: 

LISA RELL, Deputy Clerk

IMPORTANT - APPEAL RIGHTS: This decision will become final unless a written request for review or reopening is filed within 20 calendar days after the distribution/mailed date shown. If the 20th day is a Saturday, Sunday or holiday defined in F.A.C. 73B-21.004, filing may be made on the next day that is not a Saturday, Sunday or holiday. If this decision disqualifies and/or holds the claimant ineligible for benefits already received, the claimant will be required to repay those benefits. The specific amount of any overpayment will be calculated by the Department and set forth in a separate overpayment determination. However, the time to request review of this decision is as shown above and is not stopped, delayed or extended by any other determination, decision or order.

A party who did not attend the hearing for good cause may request reopening, including the reason for not attending, at connect.myflorida.com or by writing to the address at the top of this decision. The date of the confirmation page will be the filing date of a request for reopening on the Department's Web Site.

A party who attended the hearing and received an adverse decision may file a request for review to the Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission, Suite 101 Rhyne Building, 2740 Centerview Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4151; (Fax: 850-488-2123); <https://raaciap.floridajobs.org>. If mailed, the postmark date will be the filing date. If faxed, hand-delivered, delivered by courier service other than the United States Postal Service, or submitted via the Internet, the date of receipt will be the filing date. To avoid delay, include the docket number and claimant's social security number. A party requesting review should specify any and all allegations of error with respect to the referee's decision, and provide factual and/or legal support for these challenges. Allegations of error not specifically set forth in the request for review may be considered waived.

IMPORTANTE - DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN: Esta decisión pasará a ser final a menos que una solicitud por escrito para revisión o reapertura se registre dentro de 20 días de calendario después de la distribución/fecha de envío marcada en que la decisión fue remitida por correo. Si el vigésimo (20) día es un sábado, un domingo o un feriado definidos en F.A.C. 73B-21.004, el registro de la solicitud se puede realizar en el día siguiente que no sea un sábado, un domingo o un feriado. Si esta decisión descalifica y/o declara al reclamante como inelegible para recibir beneficios que ya fueron recibidos por el reclamante, se le requerirá al reclamante rembolsar esos beneficios. La cantidad específica de cualquier sobrepago [pago excesivo de beneficios] será calculada por la Agencia y establecida en una determinación de pago excesivo de beneficios que será emitida por separado. Sin embargo, el límite de tiempo para solicitar la revisión de esta decisión es como se establece anteriormente y dicho límite no es detenido, demorado o extendido por ninguna otra determinación, decisión u orden.

Una parte que no asistió a la audiencia por una buena causa puede solicitar una reapertura, incluyendo la razón por no haber comparecido en la audiencia, en connect.myflorida.com o escribiendo a la dirección en la parte superior de esta decisión. La fecha de la página de confirmación será la fecha de presentación de una solicitud de reapertura en la página de Internet del Departamento.

Una parte que asistió a la audiencia y recibió una decisión adversa puede registrar una solicitud de revisión con la Comisión de Apelaciones de Servicios de Reempleo; Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission, Suite 101 Rhyne Building, 2740 Centerview Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4151; (Fax: 850-488-2123); <https://raaciap.floridajobs.org>. Si la solicitud es enviada por correo, la fecha del sello de la oficina de correos será la fecha de registro de la solicitud. Si es enviada por telefax, entregada a mano, entregada por servicio de mensajería, con la excepción del Servicio Postal de Estados Unidos, o realizada vía el Internet, la fecha en la que se recibe la solicitud será la fecha de registro. Para evitar demora, incluya el número de expediente [*docket number*] y el número de seguro social del reclamante. Una parte que solicita una revisión debe especificar cualquiera y todos los alegatos de error con respecto a la decisión del árbitro, y proporcionar fundamentos reales y/o legales para substanciar éstos desafíos. Los alegatos de error que no se establezcan con especificidad en la solicitud de revisión pueden considerarse como renunciados.

ENPÒTAN - DWA DAPÈL: Desizyon sa a ap definitiv sòs si ou depoze yon apèl nan yon delè 20 jou apre dat distribisyon/postaj. Si 20yèm jou a se yon samdi, yon dimanch oswa yon jou konje, jan sa defini lan F.A.C. 73B-21.004, depo an kapab fèt jou aprè a, si se pa yon samdi, yon dimanch oswa yon jou konje. Si desizyon an diskalifye epi/oswa deklare moun k ap fè demann lan pa kalifye pou alokasyon li resevwa deja, moun k ap fè demann lan ap gen pou li remèt lajan li te resevwa a. Se Ajans lan k ap kalkile montan nenpòt ki peman anplis epi y ap detèmine sa lan yon desizyon separe. Sepandan, delè pou mande revizyon desizyon sa a se delè yo bay anwo a; Okenn lòt detèminasyon, desizyon oswa lòd pa ka rete, retade oubyen pwolonje dat sa a.

Yon pati ki te gen yon rezon valab pou li pat asiste seyans lan gen dwa mande pou yo ouvri ka a ankò; fòk yo bay rezon yo pat ka vini an epi fè demann nan sou sitwèb sa a, connect.myflorida.com oswa alekri nan adrès ki mansyone okomansman desizyon sa a. Dat cofimasyon page sa pral jou ou ranpli deman pou reouvewti dan web sit depatman.

Yon pati ki te asiste odyans la epi li resevwa yon desizyon negatif kapab soumèt yon demann pou revizyon retounen travay Asistans Komisyon Apèl la, Suite 101 Rhyne Building, 2740 Centerview Drive, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-4151; (Faks: 850-488-2123); <https://raaciap.floridajobs.org>. Si poste a, dat tenm ap dat li ranpli aplikasyon. Si fakse, men yo-a delivre, lage pa sèvis mesaje lòt pase Etazini Sèvis nan Etazini Nimewo, oswa soumèt sou Entènèt la, dat yo te resevwa ap dat li ranpli aplikasyon. Pou evite reta, mete nimewo rejis la ak nimewo sosyal demandè a sekirite. Yon pati pou mande revizyon ta dwe presize nenpòt ak tout akizasyon nan erè ki gen rapò ak desizyon abit la, yo epi bay sipò reyèl ak / oswa legal pou defi sa yo. Alegasyon sou erè pa espesyalman tabli nan demann nan pou revizyon yo kapab konsidere yo egzante.

An equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.