

STATE OF FLORIDA
REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE APPEALS COMMISSION

In the matter of:

Claimant/Appellant

R.A.A.C. Docket No. 18-01513

vs.

Referee Decision No. 0033185607-04U

Employer/Appellee

ORDER OF REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE APPEALS COMMISSION

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

The Commission's review is generally limited to the issues before the referee and the evidence and other pertinent information contained in the official record. Parties are advised prior to the appeals hearing before the referee that the hearing is their only opportunity to present evidence in support of their position in the case. The referee has the responsibility to develop the hearing record, weigh the evidence, judge the credibility of the witnesses, resolve conflicts in the evidence, and render a decision supported by competent, substantial evidence. The Commission reviews the evidentiary and administrative record and the referee's decision to determine whether the referee followed the proper procedures, adequately developed the evidentiary record, made appropriate and properly supported findings, and properly applied the reemployment assistance law established by the Florida Legislature. The Commission cannot reweigh the evidence and the inferences to be drawn from it. Further, absent extraordinary circumstances, the Commission cannot give credit to testimony contrary to that accepted as true by the referee.

Having considered all arguments raised on appeal and having reviewed the hearing record, the Commission concludes that the referee sufficiently followed the proper procedures and the case does not require reopening or remanding for further proceedings. The referee's material findings are supported by competent, substantial evidence in the record. The referee also correctly applied the law in deciding the case.

In most separation cases, there is clear evidence that one party or the other has communicated its intent to end the employment relationship. Whether the employee says, “I quit!” or the employer says, “you’re fired!” one party unquestionably ends the employment. In some cases, however, such a clear expression of intent is not given. When that is the case, principles of reemployment assistance law, such as the “moving party” analysis or the constructive discharge or resignation doctrines, provide the answer to the question of who ended the employment.

The claimant’s behavior on March 1 and 2, 2018, was sufficient to raise a legitimate belief that she had voluntarily quit. However, when given a chance to clarify her status in communications on March 6, 2018, the claimant eventually told the employer that she would come in to collect her belongings. That statement, in the context of the claimant’s actions that week, would have led a reasonable employer to believe that the claimant had quit. *See* R.A.A.C. Order No. 16-02602 (November 1, 2016).¹ Under these circumstances, whether the claimant had actually formulated an intent to resign or not, the referee correctly concluded that she voluntarily quit as a matter of law if not of fact.

Moreover, nothing in the employer’s actions or in the workplace environment would have given the claimant good cause attributable to the employer to resign. Good cause is “that cause attributable to the employing unit which would compel a reasonable employee to cease working.” §443.101(1)(a)1., Fla. Stat. *See also Uniweld Products, Inc. v. Industrial Relations Commission*, 277 So. 2d 827, 829 (Fla. 4th DCA 1973). Applying this test, the referee concluded that the claimant did not have good cause, and the evidence and findings support this conclusion. The employer’s indication that she wished to talk to the claimant about her actions of March 1 and 2, 2018, and her work status were entirely appropriate under the circumstances.

Finally, the referee also correctly concluded that the claimant had failed to make reasonable efforts to preserve her employment. Whenever feasible, an individual is expected to expend reasonable effort to preserve his employment. *See, e.g., Borakove v. Unemployment Appeals Commission*, 14 So. 3d 249, 251 (Fla. 1st DCA 2009); *Lawnco Services, Inc. v. Unemployment Appeals Commission*, 946 So. 2d 586, 588 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006); *Glenn v. Unemployment Appeals Commission*, 516 So. 2d 88, 89 (Fla. 3d DCA 1987).

¹ Available at http://www.floridajobs.org/finalorders/raac_finalorders/16-02602.pdf.

It is unfortunate that an individual with a long and presumably successful period of employment allowed workplace tensions to affect her to the extent the claimant did here. However, reemployment assistance benefits are intended to be payable to those who lose employment through no fault of their own. That is not the case here, and benefits must be denied.

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

8/28/2018 ,

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: Kady Ross
Deputy Clerk



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



*71606268 *

Docket No.0033 1856 07-04

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

CLAIMANT/Appellee

EMPLOYER/Appellant

APPEARANCES:

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.

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.

Issues Involved: 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.)

FINDINGS OF FACTS:The claimant began working for the employer as a probate paralegal in January 2003. On March 1, 2018, the claimant got upset with a co-worker for taking her files. The co-worker was working on some client files per the request of the employer. The claimant became upset and in front of her co-workers and within hearing range of the clients in the office stated, "I'm sick of this shit and I'm not putting up with this anymore. I'm outta here." The claimant gathered her belongings and stormed out of the office. The claimant's co-workers tried to convince her to calm down and not leave. The claimant's co-workers tried to call the claimant after she left as well. The next day March 2, 2018, the claimant came back to work. The claimant again walked out to the office before her shift ended that day. After the incidents one of the employee's notified the employer who was on vacation of the events that took place on March 1st and 2nd. On March 6, 2018, the claimant sent an email to the employer stating that she was in pain and that she would be going to the doctor and she would keep the employer posted. That same day the employer emailed the claimant informing her to bring in a doctor's note. The employer also informed the claimant that she wanted to speak to her regarding what happened on March 1st and 2nd and to discuss the claimant's continued employment with the company or should the employer take the claimant's actions on March 1, 2018, as her resignation. The employer offered to meet up with the claimant in the evening time or on a weekend. The employer also informed the claimant to bring in a doctor's note. The claimant responded your response saddens me and then she informed the employer that she would be picking up her belongings the next day. The claimant never tried to contact the employer by phone to discuss her continued employment.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW: The law provides that an individual will be disqualified for benefits who voluntarily leaves work without good cause attributable to the employing unit. Good cause is such cause as "would reasonably impel the average able-bodied qualified worker to give up his or her employment." Uniweld Products, Inc. v. Industrial Relations Commission, 277 So.2d 827 (Fla. 4th DCA 1973). Moreover, an employee with good cause to leave employment may be disqualified if reasonable effort to preserve the employment was not expended. See Glenn v. Florida Unemployment Appeals Commission, 516 So.2d 88 (Fla. 3d DCA 1987). See also Lawnco Services, Inc. v. Unemployment Appeals Commission, 946 So.2d 586 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006); Tittsworth v. Unemployment Appeals Commission, 920 So.2d 139 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006).

The evidence shows that while the employer was out on vacation on March 1, 2018, the claimant got upset with a co-worker for taking her files. The evidence shows that the co-worker was working on some client files per the request of the employer. The evidence shows that the claimant became upset and in front of her co-workers and within hearing range of the clients in the office stated, "I'm sick of this shit and I'm not putting up with this anymore. I'm outta here." The evidence shows that the claimant gathered her belongings and stormed out of the office. The evidence shows that the claimant's co-workers tried to convince her to calm down and not leave. The evidence shows that the next day March 2, 2018, the claimant came back to work and she walked out again that day prior to her shift ending. The evidence shows that one of the employees emailed the employer regarding the incidents that occurred on March 1st and March 2nd. The evidence shows that on March 6, 2018, the claimant sent an email to the employer stating that she was in pain and that she would be going to the doctor and she would keep the employer posted. The evidence further shows that the employer emailed the claimant informing her that she needed to bring in a doctor's note and that she wanted to discuss the claimant's continued employment with the company and whether the employer should take the claimant's actions on March 1, 2018, as her resignation. The evidence further shows that the employer offered to meet up with the claimant in the evening time or on a weekend to discuss the matter. The evidence further shows that the claimant responded your response saddens me and then she informed the employer that she would be picking up her belongings the next day. The evidence further shows the claimant never tried to call the employer to discuss the terms of her continued employment. Therefore, the claimant's actions on March 1, 2018, along with her letter to the employer on March 6, 2018, show that the claimant quit her job. The claimant's getting upset over another co-worker performing her job duties does not demonstrate good cause to quit. Furthermore, the claimant did not preserve reasonable effort because the employer reached out to the claimant to discuss her continued employment and the claimant refused to discuss the matter with her employer and decided to pick up her belongings the next day. Accordingly, the claimant is disqualified from receiving benefits beginning from February 25, 2018, and until you have earned \$4,675.00.

The hearing officer was presented with conflicting testimony regarding material issues of fact and is charged with resolving these conflicts. The Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission set forth factors to be considered in resolving credibility questions. These 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 contributing employer who furnishes required notice to the Department when the claimant left the work without good cause attributable to the employer.

Because the claimant quit without good cause, the employer's account will not be charged.

DECISION: The determination dated April 30, 2018, is REVERSED. The claimant is disqualified from receiving benefits beginning from February 25, 2018, and until you have earned \$4,675.00. 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 June 12, 2018.

H. Comrie
Appeals Referee

By: *Robyn L Deak*

ROBYN L. DEAK, 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 the last five digits of the 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.

There is no cost to have a case reviewed by the Commission, nor is a party required to be represented by an attorney or other representative to have a case reviewed. The Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission has not been fully integrated into the Department's CONNECT system. While correspondence can be mailed or faxed to the Commission, no correspondence can be submitted to the Commission via the CONNECT system. All parties to an appeal before the Commission must maintain a current mailing address with the Commission. A party who changes his/her mailing address in the CONNECT system must also provide the updated address to the Commission, in writing. All correspondence sent by the Commission, including its final order, will be mailed to the parties at their mailing address on record with the Commission.

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 reembolsar 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 los últimos cinco dígitos del 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.

No hay ningún costo para tener un caso revisado por la Comisión, ni es requerido que una parte sea representado por un abogado u otro representante para poder tener un caso revisado. La Comisión de Apelación de Asistencia de Reempleo no ha sido plenamente integrado en el sistema CONNECT del Departamento. Mientras que la correspondencia puede ser enviada por correo o por fax a la Comisión, ninguna correspondencia puede ser sometida a la Comisión a través del sistema CONNECT. Todas las partes en una apelación ante la Comisión deben mantener una dirección de correo actual con la Comisión. La parte que cambie su dirección de correo en el sistema CONNECT también debe proporcionar la dirección actualizada a la Comisión, por escrito. Toda la correspondencia enviada por la Comisión, incluida su orden final, será enviada a las partes en su dirección de correo en el registro con la Comisión.

ENPÒTAN - DWA DAPÈL: Desizyon sa a ap definitif sòf 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 senk dènye chif nimewo sekirite sosyal demandè a 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.

Pa gen okenn kou pou Komisyon an revize yon ka, ni ke yon pati dwe reprezante pa yon avoka oubyen lòt reprezantan pou ke la li a revize. Komisyon Apèl Asistans Reyanbochaj pa te entegre antyèman nan sistèm CONNECT Depatman an. Byenke korespondans kapab fakse oubyen pòste bay Komisyon an, okenn korespondans pa kapab soumèt bay Komisyon an atravè sistèm CONNECT. Tout pati ki nan yon apèl devan Komisyon an dwe mentni yon adrès postal ki ajou avèk Komisyon an. Yon pati ki chanje adrès postal li nan sistèm CONNECT la dwe bay Komisyon an adrès ki mete ajou a tou. Tout korespondans ke Komisyon an voye, sa enkli manda final li, pral pòste voye bay pati yo nan adrès postal yo genyen nan achiv Komisyon an.

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.