

Contesting Attendance Related Unemployment Compensation Claims

October 2005

An employee will be denied unemployment compensation when an employer proves the claimant's pattern of absence amounted to "willful misconduct." CT Public Act 04-214.

To prove "willful misconduct" the employer must show the employee was absent either without "good cause," *or* without "notice to the employer, which the employee could reasonably have provided under the circumstances," on 3 "separate instances" within a 12 month period.

Further, each 2 consecutive day period of absence is counted as a "separate instance." For example, if an employee is absent for 3 consecutive days it counts as 2 "instances."

"Good cause" is defined under the Act as "any compelling personal circumstance which would normally be recognized by the individual's employer as a proper excuse for absence, or which would prevent a reasonable person under the same conditions from reporting to work."

Examples include personal illness, a serious isolated transportation problem over which the employee had no control, or a sudden event requiring the person to address a compelling personal emergency.

"Notice" is defined as notification "through any reasonable method and within any reasonable timeframe prescribed by the employer." Even when an employee has "good cause" a failure to provide "notice" will result in the absence being counted as an "instance." CT Reg. § 31-236-26d.

Tardiness is handled separately and is considered “willful misconduct” only if the pattern of tardiness constitutes either “willful disregard of the employer’s interest,” or “a knowing violation of a reasonable and uniformly enforced rule or policy.” CT Reg. § 31-236-28.

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