

96.5 Causes for disqualification.

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

1. *Voluntary quitting.* If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

a. The individual left employment in good faith for the sole purpose of accepting other or better employment, which the individual did accept, and the individual performed services in the new employment. Benefits relating to wage credits earned with the employer that the individual has left shall be charged to the unemployment compensation fund. This paragraph applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding [section 96.8, subsection 5](#).

b. The individual's leaving was caused by the relocation of the individual's spouse by the military. The employer's account shall not be charged for any benefits paid to an individual who leaves due to the relocation of a military spouse. Relief of charges under this paragraph applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding [section 96.8, subsection 5](#).

c. The individual left employment for the necessary and sole purpose of taking care of a member of the individual's immediate family who was then injured or ill, and if after said member of the family sufficiently recovered, the individual immediately returned to and offered the individual's services to the individual's employer, provided, however, that during such period the individual did not accept any other employment.

d. The individual left employment because of illness, injury, or pregnancy upon the advice of a licensed and practicing physician or physician assistant, and upon knowledge of the necessity for absence immediately notified the employer, or the employer consented to the absence, and after recovering from the illness, injury, or pregnancy, when recovery was certified by a licensed and practicing physician or physician assistant, the individual returned to the employer and offered to perform services and the individual's regular work or comparable suitable work was not available, if so found by the department, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

e. The individual left employment upon the advice of a licensed and practicing physician or physician assistant, for the sole purpose of taking a member of the individual's family to a place having a different climate, during which time the individual shall be deemed unavailable for work, and notwithstanding during such absence the individual secures temporary employment, and returned to the individual's regular employer and offered the individual's services and the individual's regular work or comparable work was not available, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

f. The individual left the employing unit for not to exceed ten working days, or such additional time as may be allowed by the individual's employer, for compelling personal reasons, if so found by the department, and prior to such leaving had informed the individual's employer of such compelling personal reasons, and immediately after such compelling personal reasons ceased to exist the individual returned to the individual's employer and offered the individual's services and the individual's regular or comparable work was not available, provided the individual is otherwise eligible; except that during the time the individual is away from the individual's work because of the continuance of such compelling personal reasons, the individual shall not be eligible for benefits.

g. The individual left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the employer under circumstances which did or would disqualify the individual for benefits, except as provided in paragraph "a" of [this subsection](#) but, subsequent to the leaving, the individual worked in and was paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

h. The individual has left employment in lieu of exercising a right to bump or oust a fellow employee with less seniority or priority from the fellow employee's job.

i. The individual is unemployed as a result of the individual's employer selling or otherwise transferring a clearly segregable and identifiable part of the employer's business

or enterprise to another employer which does not make an offer of suitable work to the individual as provided under [subsection 3](#). However, if the individual does accept, and works in and is paid wages for, suitable work with the acquiring employer, the benefits paid which are based on the wages paid by the transferring employer shall be charged to the unemployment compensation fund provided that the acquiring employer has not received, or will not receive, a partial transfer of experience under the provisions of [section 96.7, subsection 2](#), paragraph “b”. Relief of charges under this paragraph applies to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding [section 96.8, subsection 5](#).

j. (1) The individual is a temporary employee of a temporary employment firm who notifies the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment and who seeks reassignment. Failure of the individual to notify the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment within three working days of the completion of each employment assignment under a contract of hire shall be deemed a voluntary quit unless the individual was not advised in writing of the duty to notify the temporary employment firm upon completion of an employment assignment or the individual had good cause for not contacting the temporary employment firm within three working days and notified the firm at the first reasonable opportunity thereafter.

(2) To show that the employee was advised in writing of the notification requirement of this paragraph, the temporary employment firm shall advise the temporary employee by requiring the temporary employee, at the time of employment with the temporary employment firm, to read and sign a document that provides a clear and concise explanation of the notification requirement and the consequences of a failure to notify. The document shall be separate from any contract of employment and a copy of the signed document shall be provided to the temporary employee.

(3) For purposes of this lettered paragraph:

(a) “*Temporary employee*” means an individual who is employed by a temporary employment firm to provide services to clients to supplement their workforce during absences, seasonal workloads, temporary skill or labor market shortages, and for special assignments and projects.

(b) “*Temporary employment firm*” means a person engaged in the business of employing temporary employees.

2. *Discharge for misconduct*. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual’s employment:

a. The disqualification shall continue until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual’s weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

b. Provided further, if gross misconduct is established, the department shall cancel the individual’s wage credits earned, prior to the date of discharge, from all employers.

c. Gross misconduct is deemed to have occurred after a claimant loses employment as a result of an act constituting an indictable offense in connection with the claimant’s employment, provided the claimant is duly convicted thereof or has signed a statement admitting the commission of such an act. Determinations regarding a benefit claim may be redetermined within five years from the effective date of the claim. Any benefits paid to a claimant prior to a determination that the claimant has lost employment as a result of such act shall not be considered to have been accepted by the claimant in good faith.

d. For the purposes of [this subsection](#), “*misconduct*” means a deliberate act or omission by an employee that constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of the employee’s contract of employment. Misconduct is limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer’s interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer’s interests or of the employee’s duties and obligations to the employer. Misconduct by an individual includes but is not limited to all of the following:

(1) Material falsification of the individual’s employment application.

(2) Knowing violation of a reasonable and uniformly enforced rule of an employer.

- (3) Intentional damage of an employer's property.
- (4) Consumption of alcohol, illegal or nonprescribed prescription drugs, or an impairing substance in a manner not directed by the manufacturer, or a combination of such substances, on the employer's premises in violation of the employer's employment policies.
- (5) Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, illegal or nonprescribed prescription drugs, or an impairing substance in an off-label manner, or a combination of such substances, on the employer's premises in violation of the employer's employment policies, unless the individual is compelled to work by the employer outside of scheduled or on-call working hours.
- (6) Conduct that substantially and unjustifiably endangers the personal safety of coworkers or the general public.
- (7) Incarceration for an act for which one could reasonably expect to be incarcerated that results in missing work.
- (8) Incarceration as a result of a misdemeanor or felony conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (9) Excessive unexcused tardiness or absenteeism.
- (10) Falsification of any work-related report, task, or job that could expose the employer or coworkers to legal liability or sanction for violation of health or safety laws.
- (11) Failure to maintain any license, registration, or certification that is reasonably required by the employer or by law, or that is a functional requirement to perform the individual's regular job duties, unless the failure is not within the control of the individual.
- (12) Conduct that is libelous or slanderous toward an employer or an employee of the employer if such conduct is not protected under state or federal law.
- (13) Theft of an employer or coworker's funds or property.
- (14) Intentional misrepresentation of time worked or work carried out that results in the individual receiving unearned wages or unearned benefits.

3. *Failure to accept work.* If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under [this subsection](#), the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. (1) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

- (a) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first week of unemployment.
- (b) Ninety percent, if the work is offered during the second through the third week of unemployment.
- (c) Eighty percent, if the work is offered during the fourth through the fifth week of unemployment.
- (d) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the eighth week of unemployment.
- (e) Sixty percent, if the work is offered after the eighth week of unemployment.

(2) However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

b. Notwithstanding any other provision of [this chapter](#), no work shall be deemed suitable and benefits shall not be denied under [this chapter](#) to any otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new work under any of the following conditions:

- (1) If the position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout, or other labor dispute;
- (2) If the wages, hours, or other conditions of the work offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than those prevailing for similar work in the locality;
- (3) If as a condition of being employed, the individual would be required to join a company union or to resign from or refrain from joining any bona fide labor organization.

4. *Labor disputes.*

a. For any week with respect to which the department finds that the individual's total or partial unemployment is due to a stoppage of work which exists because of a labor dispute at the factory, establishment, or other premises at which the individual is or was last employed, provided that [this subsection](#) shall not apply if it is shown to the satisfaction of the department that:

(1) The individual is not participating in or financing or directly interested in the labor dispute which caused the stoppage of work; and

(2) The individual does not belong to a grade or class of workers of which, immediately before the commencement of the stoppage, there were members employed at the premises at which the stoppage occurs, any of whom are participating in or financing or directly interested in the dispute.

b. Provided, that if in any case separate branches of work which are commonly conducted as separate businesses in separate premises are conducted in separate departments of the same premises, each such department shall, for the purposes of [this subsection](#), be deemed to be a separate factory, establishment, or other premises.

5. *Other compensation.*

a. For any week with respect to which the individual is receiving or has received payment in the form of any of the following:

- (1) Wages in lieu of notice, separation allowance, severance pay, or dismissal pay.
- (2) Compensation for temporary disability under the workers' compensation law of any state or under a similar law of the United States.

(3) A governmental or other pension, retirement or retired pay, annuity, or any other similar periodic payment made under a plan maintained or contributed to by a base period or chargeable employer where, except for benefits under the federal Social Security Act or the federal Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 or the corresponding provisions of prior law, the plan's eligibility requirements or benefit payments are affected by the base period employment or the remuneration for the base period employment. However, this subparagraph shall only be applicable if the base period employer has made one hundred percent of the contributions to the plan.

b. Provided, that if the remuneration is less than the benefits which would otherwise be due under [this chapter](#), the individual is entitled to receive for the week, if otherwise eligible, benefits reduced by the amount of the remuneration. Provided further, if benefits were paid for any week under [this chapter](#) for a period when benefits, remuneration, or compensation under paragraph "a", subparagraph (1), (2), or (3), were paid on a retroactive basis for the same period, or any part thereof, the department shall recover the excess amount of benefits paid by the department for the period, and no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid. However, compensation for service-connected disabilities or compensation for accrued leave based on military service by the beneficiary with the armed forces of the United States, irrespective of the amount of the benefit, does not disqualify any individual otherwise qualified from any of the benefits contemplated herein. A deduction shall not be made from the amount of benefits payable for a week for individuals receiving federal social security pensions to take into account the individuals' contributions to the pension program.

6. *Benefits from other state.* For any week with respect to which or a part of which an individual has received or is seeking unemployment benefits under an unemployment compensation law of another state or of the United States, provided that if the appropriate

agency of such other state or of the United States finally determines that the individual is not entitled to such unemployment benefits, this disqualification shall not apply.

7. *Vacation pay.*

a. When an employer makes a payment or becomes obligated to make a payment to an individual for vacation pay, or for vacation pay allowance, or as pay in lieu of vacation, such payment or amount shall be deemed wages as defined in [section 96.1A, subsection 40](#), and shall be applied as provided in paragraph “c” of [this subsection 7](#).

b. When, in connection with a separation or layoff of an individual, the individual’s employer makes a payment or payments to the individual, or becomes obligated to make a payment to the individual as, or in the nature of, vacation pay, or vacation pay allowance, or as pay in lieu of vacation. The amount of a payment or obligation to make payment, is deemed wages as defined in [section 96.1A, subsection 40](#), and shall be applied as provided in paragraph “c” of [this subsection 7](#).

c. Of the wages described in paragraph “a” or paragraph “b”, a sum equal to the wages of such individual for a normal workday shall be attributed to, or deemed to be payable to the individual with respect to, the first and each subsequent workday in such period until such amount so paid or owing is exhausted, not to exceed five workdays. Any individual receiving or entitled to receive wages as provided herein shall be ineligible for benefits for any week in which the sums equal or exceed the individual’s weekly benefit amount. If the amount is less than the weekly benefit amount of such individual, the individual’s benefits shall be reduced by such amount.

d. Notwithstanding contrary provisions in paragraphs “a”, “b”, and “c”, if an individual is separated from employment and is scheduled to receive vacation payments during the period of unemployment attributable to the employer, then payments made by the employer to the individual or an obligation to make a payment by the employer to the individual for vacation pay, vacation pay allowance or pay in lieu of vacation shall not be deemed wages as defined in [section 96.1A, subsection 40](#), for any period in excess of five workdays and such payments or the value of such obligations shall not be deducted for any period in excess of one week from the unemployment benefits the individual is otherwise entitled to receive under [this chapter](#).

e. If an employer pays or is obligated to pay a bonus to an individual at the same time the employer pays or is obligated to pay vacation pay, a vacation pay allowance, or pay in lieu of vacation, the bonus shall not be deemed wages for purposes of determining benefit eligibility and amount, and the bonus shall not be deducted from unemployment benefits the individual is otherwise entitled to receive under [this chapter](#).

8. *Administrative penalty.* If the department finds that, with respect to any week of an insured worker’s unemployment for which such person claims credit or benefits, such person has, within the thirty-six calendar months immediately preceding such week, with intent to defraud by obtaining any benefits not due under [this chapter](#), willfully and knowingly made a false statement or misrepresentation, or willfully and knowingly failed to disclose a material fact; such person shall be disqualified for the week in which the department makes such determination, and forfeit all benefit rights under the unemployment compensation law for a period of not more than the remaining benefit period as determined by the department according to the circumstances of each case. Any penalties imposed by [this subsection](#) shall be in addition to those otherwise prescribed in [this chapter](#).

9. *Athletes — disqualified.* Services performed by an individual, substantially all of which consist of participating in sports or athletic events or training or preparing to so participate, for any week which commences during the period between two successive sport seasons or similar periods, if such individual performs such services in the first of such seasons or similar periods and there is a reasonable assurance that such individual will perform such services in the later of such season or similar periods.

10. *Aliens — disqualified.* For services performed by an alien unless such alien is an individual who was lawfully admitted for permanent residence at the time such services were performed, was lawfully present for the purpose of performing such services, or was permanently residing in the United States under color of law at the time such services were performed, including an alien who is lawfully present in the United States as a result of the application of the provisions of section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Any data or information required of individuals applying for benefits to determine whether benefits are not payable to them because of their alien status shall be uniformly required from all applicants for benefits. In the case of an individual whose application for benefits would otherwise be approved, no determination that benefits to such individual are not payable because of the individual's alien status shall be made except upon a preponderance of the evidence.

11. *Incarceration — disqualified.*

a. If the department finds that the individual became separated from employment due to the individual's incarceration in a jail, municipal holding facility, or correctional institution or facility, unless the department finds all of the following:

(1) The individual notified the employer that the individual would be absent from work due to the individual's incarceration prior to any such absence.

(2) Criminal charges relating to the incarceration were not filed against the individual, all criminal charges against the individual relating to the incarceration were dismissed, or the individual was found not guilty of all criminal charges relating to the incarceration.

(3) The individual reported back to the employer within two work days of the individual's release from incarceration and offered services.

(4) The employer rejected the individual's offer of services.

b. A disqualification under this subsection shall continue until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

12. *Supplemental part-time employment.* If the department finds that an individual is disqualified for benefits under [subsection 1](#) or [2](#) based on the nature of the individual's separation from supplemental part-time employment, all wages paid by the supplemental part-time employer to that individual in any quarter which are chargeable following a disqualifying separation under [subsection 1](#) or [2](#) shall not be considered wages credited to the individual until such time as the individual meets the conditions of requalification as provided for in this chapter, or until the period of disqualification provided for in this chapter has elapsed.

13. *Overpayment resulting in disqualification.* If the department finds that an individual has received benefits by reason of misrepresentation pursuant to [section 96.16](#), such individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the balance of the benefits received by the individual due to misrepresentation, including all penalties, interest, and lien fees, is paid in full.

14. *Marijuana or controlled substance use in the workplace — disqualified.*

a. For purposes of [this subsection](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) "Controlled substance" means the same as defined in [section 124.101](#).

(2) "Marijuana" means the same as defined in [section 124E.2](#).

b. If the department finds that the individual became separated from employment due to ingesting marijuana in the workplace, working while under the influence of marijuana, or testing positive for any other controlled substance, for which the individual did not have a current prescription or which the individual was otherwise using unlawfully, under a drug testing policy pursuant to [section 730.5](#) or any other procedures provided by federal statutes, federal regulations, or orders issued pursuant to federal law.

c. A disqualification under [this subsection](#) shall continue until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

[C39, §1551.11; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, §96.5; 81 Acts, ch 19, §2]

83 Acts, ch 190, §9, 10, 27; 85 Acts, ch 99, §2; 86 Acts, ch 1166, §1; 87 Acts, ch 78, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1261, §28; 91 Acts, ch 45, §3, 4; 92 Acts, ch 1045, §1, 2; 95 Acts, ch 109, §2; 96 Acts, ch 1121, §2; 96 Acts, ch 1186, §23; 97 Acts, ch 132, §1; 2001 Acts, ch 111, §1, 6; 2007 Acts, ch 22, §26, 27; 2007 Acts, ch 215, §245, 258; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §201; 2010 Acts, ch 1048, §1; 2017 Acts, ch 70, §1 – 3, 5; 2018 Acts, ch 1080, §2, 3; 2018 Acts, ch 1169, §21; 2020 Acts, ch 1062, §87; 2020 Acts, ch 1116, §1; 2022 Acts, ch 1066, §3; 2022 Acts, ch 1136, §4 – 6; 2023 Acts, ch 66, §21

Referred to in [§96.3](#), [96.4](#), [96.6](#), [96.29](#)