

*This opinion is nonprecedential except as provided by
Minn. R. Civ. App. P. 136.01, subd. 1(c).*

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN COURT OF APPEALS
A25-1664**

Renae Lynn Hagen,
Relator,

vs.

Coast to Coast Logistics,
Respondent,

Department of Employment and Economic Development,
Respondent.

**Filed June 8, 2026
Affirmed
Reyes, Judge**

Department of Employment and Economic Development
File No. 51891573-3

Renae Lynn Hagen, Burnsville, Minnesota (self-represented relator)

Coast to Coast Logistics, Maple Grove, Minnesota (respondent employer)

Melannie Markham, Keri Phillips, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, St. Paul, Minnesota (for respondent department)

Considered and decided by Bond, Presiding Judge; Reyes, Judge; and Harris, Judge.

NONPRECEDENTIAL OPINION

REYES, Judge

Relator challenges the determination of an unemployment-law judge (ULJ) that she was ineligible for unemployment benefits based on employment misconduct, arguing that

(1) the ULJ relied on improper evidence and (2) a single incident of profanity does not rise to the level of employment misconduct. We affirm.

FACTS

Relator Renae Lynn Hagen worked as a delivery associate and supervisor for respondent Coast to Coast Logistics, an Amazon delivery partner, from March 2024 through June 2025. On March 10, 2025, Coast to Coast's human-resources director (the director) gave relator a verbal warning during a training meeting regarding her use of profanity. The director testified that she understood that everyone swears once in a while, but relator's swearing was excessive, especially for a supervisor.

On or about March 26, 2025, relator was at an Amazon station to load her vehicle. A tote was missing, so she asked D., another Coast to Coast employee, to assist her in finding it. D. did not assist, so relator went and found the tote herself. An Amazon employee, A., encouraged relator to move quickly to load the van to allow the next group of delivery associates to arrive. A. reported to the director that, upon her return with the tote, relator said "f-ck you" to A.

The director learned of this incident as part of a separate investigation into other incidents. In June 2025, Coast to Coast discharged relator for saying "f-ck you" to A., which was a violation of company policy prohibiting "insulting, unprofessional or offensive behavior toward a company [employee], or Amazon station employee, customer, or general public." The director later acknowledged that Coast to Coast employees do "use some swear words occasionally," but they are trained not to swear at all to maintain a

“professional environment.” She also emphasized that it was inappropriate and insulting to say “f-ck you” to someone regardless of relator’s frustration level.

Relator applied for unemployment benefits. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development initially determined that relator was eligible for benefits, even though Coast to Coast discharged her “for using the ‘F’ word,” because her conduct “was not intentional, negligent or indifferent, and therefore was not employment misconduct.” Coast to Coast appealed, and an unemployment-law judge (ULJ) held a hearing. The ULJ then determined that “[Relator] stating ‘F-ck You’ to a coworker was intentional, negligent, or indifferent and constitutes a serious violation of the employer’s reasonable standards.” The ULJ determined that Coast to Coast “discharged relator because of employment misconduct,” making her ineligible for unemployment benefits. Relator requested reconsideration, and a ULJ affirmed the determination.

This appeal by writ of certiorari follows.

DECISION

Relator challenges the ULJ’s finding that she engaged in employment misconduct, arguing that (1) the ULJ relied on improper evidence and (2) her discharge was based on a single incident, which does not rise to the level of employment misconduct.

“An applicant who was discharged from employment by an employer is ineligible for all unemployment benefits” if they were “discharged because of employment misconduct.” Minn. Stat. § 268.095, subd. 4 (2024); *see also Wichmann v. Travalia & U.S. Directives, Inc.*, 729 N.W.2d 23, 27 (Minn. App. 2007). “Employment misconduct means any intentional, negligent, or indifferent conduct, on the job or off the job, that is a

serious violation of the standards of behavior the employer has the right to reasonably expect of the employee.” Minn. Stat. § 268.095, subd. 6(a) (2024).

“Whether an employee engaged in conduct that disqualifies [them] from unemployment benefits presents a mixed question of law and fact.” *Schmidgall v. FilmTec Corp.*, 644 N.W.2d 801, 804 (Minn. 2002). Whether an employee committed a particular act is a question of fact, and appellate courts “will not disturb the ULJ’s factual findings when the evidence substantially sustains them.” *Skarhus v. Davanni’s Inc.*, 721 N.W.2d 340, 344 (Minn. App. 2006). But whether a particular act constitutes “employment misconduct” is a question of law, which appellate courts review de novo. *Schmidgall*, 644 N.W.2d at 804. *See also* Minn. Stat. § 268.105, subd. 7(d) (2024) (outlining reasons that Minnesota Court of Appeals may affirm ULJ decision).

I. The ULJ relied on appropriate evidence presented at the hearing to support its factual findings.

Relator first argues that the ULJ improperly relied entirely on hearsay, or “secondhand interpretation,” as well as “assumptions.” We disagree.

“An unemployment law judge may receive any evidence that possesses probative value, including hearsay, if it is the type of evidence on which reasonable, prudent persons are accustomed to rely in the conduct of their serious affairs.” Minn. R. 3310.2922 (2024). Because of this, “[a] witness at an evidentiary hearing is not required to have firsthand knowledge.” *Skarhus*, 721 N.W.2d at 345. ULJs decide whether an employee is eligible for employment benefits “by a preponderance of the evidence.” Minn. Stat. § 268.031, subd. 1 (2024); *see also* *Wilson v. Mortg. Res. Ctr., Inc.*, 888 N.W.2d 452, 461 (Minn.

2016) (referencing standard of proof). “We view the ULJ’s factual findings in the light most favorable to the decision, giving deference to the credibility determinations made by the ULJ.” *Skarhus*, 721 N.W.2d at 344 (citations omitted).

The ULJ heard testimony from the director and relator about what relator said at the Amazon station. During the director’s testimony, she shared statements from both D. and A. D. claimed in his statement that he had heard relator “yell f-ck you from a few feet away.” A.’s statement claimed that relator was “cussing, being disrespectful and was very hard to work with,” and ultimately “expressed her frustration in an inappropriate way” by “yelling ‘f-ck you’” at A.

Relator testified that she did not say anything to A. and instead spoke only to D. She asserted that, after she found the tote, D. said to her, “you found it, you f-ckin found it,” and she responded, “yeah thanks for your help [D.] . . . I found it way in the back of the f-cking building.” Relator admitted to swearing in the workplace “maybe once a day” and that she “might swear more” when she is upset. The ULJ found relator’s testimony about swearing at the Amazon employee not credible, but her testimony about swearing generally credible.

Ultimately, the ULJ found that:

On or about March 26, 2025, [relator] was at the Amazon station to load her vehicle. There was a tote missing so [relator] went to find the tote. [Relator] found the tote but was frustrated. [A.], an [Amazon] employee, encouraged [relator] to hurry up. [Relator] said, “F-ck You!” to [A.] in front of [D.], another [Coast to Coast] coworker.

Although Hagen denies saying, “f-ck you” to anyone, we defer to the ULJ’s credibility determinations. We conclude that the ULJ relied upon appropriate evidence that supported its factual findings.

II. The ULJ appropriately determined that relator’s single incident of using profanity toward another person constituted employment misconduct.

Relator next argues that her behavior did not constitute employment misconduct because the single incident amounted to “selective enforcement” of Coast to Coast’s policies when profanity was common in her workplace. We are not persuaded.

A single incident may be sufficient to establish employment misconduct. *See Schmidgall*, 644 N.W.2d at 806. But when an applicant is discharged for conduct that “involved only a single incident, that is an important fact that must be considered in deciding whether the conduct rises to the level of employment misconduct.” Minn. Stat. § 268.095, subd. 6(d) (2024). The ULJ must “afford weight to the fact of the single-incident nature of the conduct without directing that the conduct be construed as misconduct or not.” *Potter v. N. Empire Pizza, Inc.*, 805 N.W.2d 872, 876 (Minn. App. 2011), *rev. denied* (Minn. Nov. 15, 2011).

The supreme court has concluded that “refusing to abide by an employer’s reasonable policies and requests amounts to disqualifying [employment] misconduct.” *Schmidgall*, 644 N.W.2d at 804. An employee’s rude behavior toward customers, fellow employees, and supervisors may also constitute employment misconduct. *See, e.g., Montgomery v. F & M Marquette Nat’l Bank*, 384 N.W.2d 602, 605 (Minn. App. 1986) (concluding that employment-misconduct determination “is sufficiently supported by the

evidence in the record of [employee’s] rudeness and insubordination”), *rev. denied* (Minn. June 13, 1986). Furthermore, whether “other employees violated [the] same rules and were disciplined or discharged is not relevant.” *Sivertson v. Sims Sec., Inc.*, 390 N.W.2d 868, 871 (Minn. App. 1986), *rev. denied* (Minn. Aug. 20, 1986).

Coast to Coast discharged relator for saying “f-ck you” to an Amazon employee with whom she was working. Relator had received the employee handbook, acknowledged receipt of it in writing, and had received a verbal warning for using excessive profanity two weeks prior to the incident in question. Her conduct did not involve merely punctuating her language with a swear word. Instead, relator swore directly at another person in a way that insulted that person, conduct from which an employer can reasonably expect an employee to refrain in the workplace. And although relator argues that Coast to Coast selectively enforced its rules against her, that is irrelevant to an employment-misconduct determination. *Id.*

We conclude that the ULJ did not err by determining that relator saying “f-ck you” to the Amazon employee is “intentional, negligent, or indifferent conduct . . . that is a serious violation of the standards of behavior the employer has the right to reasonably expect of the employee.” Minn. Stat. § 268.095, subd. 6(a) (2024).

Affirmed.