

# Workplace violence rules out unemployment benefits

If an employee engages in violent behavior and is fired, she isn't entitled to unemployment compensation benefits. Fighting amounts to misconduct, even if the employee claims she was provoked into violence.

**Recent case:** Debra worked in housekeeping for a health care facility for over 20 years. The facility had a rule against workplace violence. Debra got into an argument with a co-worker in which the co-worker called her a racist name. Debra claimed she "lost it" and slammed the co-worker into a copy machine. The co-worker had to go to the hospital and suffered a concussion as a result of the fight. Debra was fired.

She requested unemployment compensation benefits and tried to argue she was provoked, among other excuses. It didn't work. Her request was denied. (*Barrett v. Jourdain/Perpitch Extended Care*, No. A160050, Court of Appeals of Minnesota, 2016)