

STATE OF WISCONSIN
BEFORE THE WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

JORDAN THOME-HOUGH, Appellant,

vs.

STATE OF WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, Respondent.

Case ID: 1.0818

Case Type: PA

DECISION NO. 41244-A

Appearances:

Jordan Thome-Hough, 510 S. Main St., Lake Mills, Wisconsin, appearing on his own behalf.

William Ramsey, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, Department of Administration, 101 East Wilson Street, 10th Floor, P.O. Box 7864, Madison, Wisconsin, appearing on behalf of the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

DECISION AND ORDER

On September 2, 2025, Jordan Thome-Hough filed an appeal with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission asserting he had been suspended for three days without just cause by the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC).

A hearing was held on December 3, 2025, by Commission Chairman Peter G. Davis. The parties made closing argument at the conclusion of the hearing.

Being fully advised on the premises and having considered the matter, the Commission makes and issues the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Jordan Thome-Hough (Thome-Hough) is employed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) as a Sergeant at Oakhill Correctional Institution (OCI), and he had permanent status in class at the time of his suspension.

2. OCI is a minimum-security correctional facility located in Oregon, Wisconsin operated by DOC, a state agency of the State of Wisconsin.

3. On December 13, 2024, Thome-Hough only partially completed an hourly security round.
4. On December 23, 2024, Thome-Hough failed to conduct a timely hourly security round.
5. On January 6, 2025, Thome-Hough twice failed to timely conduct an hourly security round.
6. On January 30, 2025, Thome-Hough failed to timely conduct an hourly security round.

Based on the above and foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission makes and issues the following:

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission has jurisdiction over this appeal pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 230.44 (1)(c).
2. The State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections did have just cause within the meaning of Wis. Stat. § 230.34(1)(a) to suspend Jordan Thome-Hough for three days.

Based on the above and foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission makes and issues the following:

ORDER

The three-day suspension of Jordan Thome-Hough by the State of Wisconsin Department of Corrections is affirmed.

Issued at Madison, Wisconsin, this 9th day of December 2025.

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

Peter G. Davis, Chairman

MEMORANDUM ACCOMPANYING DECISION AND ORDER

Section 230.34(1)(a), Stats., states in pertinent part:

An employee with permanent status in class ... may be removed, suspended without pay, discharged, reduced in base pay or demoted only for just cause.

Section 230.44(1)(c), Stats., provides that a State employee with permanent status in class:

may appeal a demotion, layoff, suspension, discharge or reduction in base pay to the commission ... if the appeal alleges that the decision was not based on just cause.

Jordan Thome-Hough had permanent status in class at the time of his suspension and his appeal alleges that the suspension was not based on just cause.

The State has the burden of proof to establish that Thome-Hough was guilty of the alleged misconduct and whether the misconduct constitutes just cause for the discipline imposed. *Reinke v. Personnel Bd.*, 53 Wis.2d 123 (1971); *Safransky v. Personnel Bd.*, 62 Wis.2d 464 (1974).

The basic facts are not in dispute and are set out in Findings of Fact 3-6.

Thome-Hough nonetheless asserts he did not engage in any misconduct for a variety of reasons.

First, he protests that that DOC changed the emphasis on timely completion of rounds and use of the “pipe” to record timely completion. Clearly, it is up to DOC to decide what emphasis to place on timely and documented completion of rounds. Thome-Hough received a memo from the OCI Warden confirming the renewed emphasis on timely and documented rounds.

Next, Thome-Hough asserts the OCI Warden’s memo was not clear. To his credit, he sought clarification from the Warden. The Warden responded. Thome-Hough contends the Warden’s response was not clear. The Commission disagrees but, in any event, if Thome-Hough was still not clear, it was his obligation to ask. He did not do so.

Thome-Hough argues that he completes what he views as the most important part of a security round-interacting with the inmates and assuring they are safe. DOC agrees it is his obligation to interact but contends he must do so in timely and documented manner. It is DOC that gets to establish all the components of a timely completed round and Thome-Hough did not meet the DOC standard on several occasions. It is also important to note that on December 13, 2024, Thome-Hough did not in fact timely interact with/check on the welfare of all the inmates he was responsible for.

As the Commission has not found any of Thome-Hough's arguments to be persuasive, the Commission concludes he engaged in misconduct as set out in Findings of Fact 3-6.

Turning to the issue of whether there was just cause for a three-day suspension, Thome-Hough had no discipline on his record at the time the suspension was imposed. Thus, the three-day suspension was a one level skip in the standard DOC disciplinary progression.

Timely and documented completion of security rounds can be a matter of life or death for an inmate—particularly for the inmate population housed at OCI. Given Thome-Hough's failure to meet that responsibility on multiple occasions, the Commission concludes that there is just cause for a three-day suspension.

Given the foregoing, the suspension is affirmed.

Issued at Madison, Wisconsin, this 9th day of December 2025.

WISCONSIN EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

Peter G. Davis, Chairman