

Certified Payroll Solution version 5.0 by Sunburst Software Solutions, Inc.

Overall Rating **9.0**

Product Name

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Reviewed By

Sarah Watson, CPA
Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor
sarahwatsoncpa@yahoo.com

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Summary

For nearly seven years, Sunburst Software Solutions' innovative creation has been automating the tedious task of certified payroll reporting both at the federal and state level. Not a stand-alone product, Certified Payroll Solutions is specifically designed to work with QuickBooks Pro/Premier editions 2005-2007 and Enterprise editions 5.0-7.0. It will also work for those processing manual payroll in QuickBooks 2003/2004 and Enterprise edition 3.0/4.0.

To generate the certified payroll reports, the product maintains linked records that it combines with information extracted from QuickBooks. Additionally, several other EEOC and union benefit reports are available within the product.

Strengths

The developers have over twenty years of knowledge and experience in construction and software development which they have utilized to create a product that complies with the Federal Davis-Bacon Act and over 28 state specific prevailing wage reporting requirements. End-users have access to a wealth of technical support options both on the company's website and within the product. Phone support is provided state-side by a Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor. The software utilizes Intuit's Software Development Kit on a read-only basis, so users can feel confident that their QuickBooks files will not be altered by the program.

Limitations

The product is limited by Intuit's SDK to the data it can query from the company's files. The majority of the information necessary for the certified report can be extracted directly from QuickBooks, but the federal withholding allowances for each employee must be added manually into CPS. The SDK also contains an issue when transferring employee hours if they are not rounded to the nearest minute within QuickBooks.

Wish List

Automatic program updates and user log-in for added security are the only items I would add to a wish list. Product updates are not currently available in an automatic format and must be done manually. Users are notified by e-mail when an update is available for download and installation. Currently there is no way to setup users or passwords within the program.

Product Ratings	Rating	Ratings Definitions
<p>Setup and Installation:</p> <p>Whether the user selects the available electronic download or CD delivery format, the software installation is straight-forward and easy to follow. Once the installation files are activated, the user is prompted to watch a short training demonstration. Two notices are given to the user to select their corresponding state before continuing with the installation. The license information is contained within the software, so once the install process is complete, the user is ready to setup their basic system preferences within CPS. Careful attention should be given to the QuickBooks setup requirements listed in the program documentation so that the user can avoid potential errors when generating their first certified payroll report.</p>	9.0	<p>10.0 (Perfect): This exceedingly rare score is reserved for a product that is as perfect as it could be.</p> <p>9.0 to 9.9 (Spectacular): A product that receives a rating in this range succeeds at meeting all of its intended users' needs and has no meaningful drawbacks.</p> <p>8.0 to 8.9 (Excellent): A product that receives a rating in this range is superior in so many ways that its relatively few drawbacks are not very important.</p> <p>7.0 to 7.9 (Very good): While the strengths of a product scoring in this range certainly outweigh its weaknesses, it has some minor faults that certain users should be aware of.</p>
<p>Interface:</p> <p>CPS avoids unnecessary graphics and icons and instead utilizes a plain background with a menu driven interface in order to maximize program performance. The menus are organized in a logical format and help is readily available on each screen.</p>	9.0	<p>6.0 to 6.9 (Good): This range represents a product that is above average. Its strengths slightly outweigh its weaknesses, making it good for most uses but not a standout.</p>
<p>Features:</p> <p>By automating the certified payroll reporting function and eliminating double entry of data, companies can save valuable time and avoid potential reporting errors. The program is designed to extract as much data as possible from the company's QuickBooks file. Linked records are maintained within CPS for information QuickBooks cannot store. Once the user adds the required information to CPS, no additional setup is necessary unless there is a modification to a job, employee, or payroll item within QuickBooks. CPS includes the option to have QuickBooks notify it each time these items are changed. Also included at no additional charge is Wage Manager Solution to facilitate payroll item maintenance within QuickBooks.</p>	9.0	<p>5.0 to 5.9 (Average): A product that scores in this range is functional but unremarkable.</p> <p>4.0 to 4.9 (Mediocre): Products in this range are below average. They fall in the middle of the pack for most features, but suffer from a few additional major flaws.</p>
<p>Follow-through on Claims</p> <p>Get paid faster, create accurate reports, eliminate transposition errors, and create efficiency in your job are just some of the claims made in the company's materials. These benefits are supported by using CPS.</p>	9.5	<p>3.0 to 3.9 (Poor): A customer should probably not consider purchasing a product in this range or lower. There may be one or two specialized circumstances, however, that could justify the purchase of this product for a very low price for a specific demand.</p>
<p>Ease of Use/Service and Support</p> <p>CPS' menus are logically organized by function making navigation within the product very straight-forward.</p> <p>Although the documentation can be overwhelming, the overview training does an excellent job at acquainting the new user with the basic functions to begin certified payroll reporting. The company offers a new user 30 minutes of technical support with purchase of the software. Additional support can be purchased, and an annual maintenance contract includes product updates as well as two technical support incidents. The company's website contains product specific help, a construction industry newsletter, and a user forum. Phone support is available Monday through Friday from 8-6 EST.</p>	9.0	<p>2.0 to 2.9 (Terrible): A product that receives a rating in this range does not satisfy any of its intended users' needs and has no meaningful strengths.</p> <p>1.0 to 1.9 (Abysmal): A product in this range should never have been produced. This product has no redeeming qualities and worse, may actually harm the user or the user's productivity.</p>



Data Security

7.9

CPS accesses QuickBooks on a read-only basis which protects the company's data file from accidental alteration. CPS also has an enhanced backup and restore feature to protect the database files. The program doesn't currently offer user log-in with password protection; therefore, nothing prohibits anyone with access to the workstation from using the product.

Privacy

9.5

The privacy policy is clearly stated in the program documentation materials and on the company's website.

Integration with QuickBooks

9.5

Since CPS was specifically designed to integrate with QuickBooks, the user can feel confident that the data is shared seamlessly between the products. The user can add menu items to QuickBooks to quickly run certified payroll reports without having to switch back and forth between programs. Notifications can be enabled if items change within QuickBooks that may affect the CPS database. The developers have created a remarkable product that will definitely save the user valuable time when used in conjunction with QuickBooks.