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www.CheckMark.com

800-444-9922

CheckMark Software offers its self-named CheckMark Payroll, a traditionally installed live payroll system designed for use by accountants or small businesses as a multi-employer payroll management system. The program can be run on Windows or Mac computers, providing support for all federal and state reporting requirements, and offering Direct Deposit and basic HR and benefits tracking functions. For this review, CheckMark Payroll is in the “Practitioner/Multiple Employer” category of payroll programs, providing a system in which a firm or business entity manages virtually all of the payroll processes, including data entry, processing, compliance reporting, checks and other tasks. The system also can be used for after-the-fact payroll.

BASIC SYSTEM FUNCTIONS

CheckMark Payroll shares a similar interface as the CheckMark MultiLedger accounting program, with a non-traditional menu screen structure that provides a grid-based layout for accessing the key areas of the program. This Command Center includes groups for setup, payroll processing and reporting functions, with each including additional options for specific work tasks. Such areas include basic company information, setup of federal state and local taxes, employee categories, departmental costing options, deductions, check customization, default settings and reporting.

Data-entry screens use tabbed formats and quick lookup features, as well as the

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Payroll schedules can be daily, weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, quarterly, annually or any variation, and each company can have multiple payroll groups for frequency or departmental purposes. It can handle any number of such payrolls, and pricing remains the same regardless of the number of payrolls processed. However, each must be run independently as no batch processing options are provided across multiple client entities. Multi-employee views are available for data entry and editing. The program can support any number of users across a network, but is suited more toward smaller firms with a few concurrent staff members accessing the system.

CheckMark provides tax tables and compliance reporting for federal and all 50 states but offers only limited support for tax tables for municipal and special income taxing districts. These should be maintained manually. Direct Deposit functions included in the program have the ability to create ACH files for distributing employee pay into two accounts, while an option with National Payment Corporation is available for deposits into as many as four accounts. CheckMark offers unlimited employee deductions, including the ability to withhold and track any pre- and post-tax deductions such as garnishments, 401(k), insurance, cafeteria plans and unions, but it does not specifically offer workers' comp. Accruals management functions are also offered for managing paid time off. 3.75

REPORTING & MONITORING

CheckMark Payroll's compliance reporting capabilities include state and federal quarterly and annual reports, as well as electronic filing options to most taxing entities. It does not offer new-hire reporting to state agencies. The system's management reporting includes departmental costing, deductions, wages, third-party payments, accruals, check registers and GL output. Reports offer little customization options, and no automated due-date management functions are

included in the program. Employee information screens provide options for tracking

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QuickBooks, Peachtree, spreadsheets and plain text. It can also import employee data from most time clock systems. Data can be exported into formats for import into the GLs of most accounting systems. Although no specific functions are offered for timesheet management, some utility is available using employee-focused reporting options. 4

HELP/SUPPORT

Traditional Help and index functions are available along with additional tools on the company's website, including a knowledgebase, tutorials, support issues and documentation. System and rate table updates are offered periodically and are available for download from the support website or by manually using the "check for updates" function. Support for the first 60 days is included with basic pricing, but continued technical support requires purchase of either a Priority or Essential support plan, or a per-incident support charge costing \$3 per minute with a 10-minute minimum. A support package is not required for system updates. 4

CLIENT SELF-SERVICE FEATURES

CheckMark Payroll does not offer any online components for client or employee self-service and therefore was not rated in this area. N/A

SUMMARY & PRICING

CheckMark Payroll is an inexpensive payroll package designed for use by professional preparers or in-house by businesses managing multiple employer payroll functions. The system is best geared toward lower volumes of entities and employees, providing a mostly manual payroll system with support for federal and state reporting. Pricing is fixed at \$249, with annual support packages starting at \$149.

2010 Overall Rating 4

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