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*From the September 2005 Review of [Boutique Work-Style Payroll Software](#)*

Industrial Strength Payroll from Phoenix Phive Software Corporation offers payroll processing live or after-the-fact, geared toward public accountants with multiple clients or businesses with multiple independent divisions. It supports up to 998 companies or divisions with up to 5,000 employees each, with up to three concurrent states per company, with multi-state support for employee taxes, as well. The program supports all 50 states and multiple pay frequencies, including daily, weekly, biweekly, semimonthly and monthly. Industrial Strength Payroll costs \$495 for a single user; an unlimited user site license is an additional \$225. The first year of system maintenance and support, which includes tax table updates, is included in the price and costs \$148.50 per subsequent year.

#### **EASE-OF-USE/DATA ENTRY — 4 Stars**

Industrial Strength Payroll uses a web-based interface that is somewhat comfortable and sports forward and back navigation buttons as well as other icons, a Client Locator bar (where the web address field would be) and web-like favorite “links” on the upper toolbar that provide access to the primary components of the program, including Employees, Clients, Calculations and Reports. I think a graphical menu in addition to or in place of the available client and employee selection methods (links and the pull-down menu) would be a little more convenient. However, users have the option of several Hot Keys, which may ease use for many users. Additional buttons on the screen, such as print, edit and save are disabled when not appropriate to particular tasks.

For firm, client (company) and employee data entry, the system uses multi-tabbed

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features and the URL-like address bar can make a user think and feel as though they are within a web browser, it does not work as a web browser. Such functionality, which does exist in some programs, could be helpful for Help utilities, accessing the company's web site and other functions.

### **FEATURES — 3.5 Stars**

Industrial Strength Payroll includes direct deposit, which can be directed to up to two accounts per employee, with two tax states per employee and three per company. Employees may also have taxes withheld from one state, and SUTA accrued for another. The system can be set to manage up to 20 departments per client company, with up to eight types of regular pay per company, eight 1099 pay types and tip reporting, as well as 12 deductions. Common types of each are automatically included and set up in the program, but these can be overridden or changed based upon client need, such as for piecework or shift premiums. The system supports management of cafeteria plans, 401(k), 403(b), S.I.M.P.L.E. and SARSEP deferred compensation plans, as well as accrual-based fringe benefits, dependent care benefits and Subchapter 'S' medical payments.

Industrial Strength Payroll can process an unlimited number of years of payroll for a client at the same time, easing year-end processing by not requiring close-out of the ending year prior to processing of new year payrolls. User-level password-based access controls allow restricting tasks and client access to particular users.

### **REPORTING CAPABILITIES — 4 Stars**

Industrial Strength Payroll manages and reports federal and state unemployment tax liabilities via the system's worksheets, and changes in federal tax deposit liability are reported on registers for every period. General reports

include all month, all quarter, history, register and summary, along with an

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and reporting GL postings, in addition to a GL interface report. Data can also be exported to ASCII, which can then be imported by Excel and many financial applications.

### **TRAINING, SUPPORT & UPDATES — 2.5 Stars**

Tax table and program updates are included in the cost of the software. The built-in help system is adequate, with a traditional Windows-based Help utility that includes the basics of Contents, Index and Find, and also includes an Employee Management Overview section for employee-related tasks. But links to support are not present, nor is there content-specific assistance. The Phoenix Phive web site offers minimal support, with access to renewing maintenance, buying forms or ordering additional supplies. At the time of this review, the company's online shopping cart system was "under construction." As well, I saw no FAQs or training guides/tutorials.

### **SUMMARY**

Industrial Strength Payroll offers a basic application for managing payroll, compliance and benefits for multiple companies, providing a limited but competent set of features and adequate reporting tools, although navigation might be a little awkward initially for some users. The system is best suited to payroll professionals whose clients have less complex payroll needs and compliance issues.

### **2005 Overall Rating — 3.5 Stars**

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