Exsys Case Study

Time, Resource, and Taxpayer Savings

U.S. Department of Labor
Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Online Advisors cover more than a dozen complex areas of OSHA regulations. More than 40,000 advisors are downloaded from OSHA Web sites per year. This innovation has saved businesses more than $100 million per year in consultants and attorney fees.

OSHA's Permit Spaces Advisor gives users interactive expert help to apply OSHA's Permit Required Confined Spaces Standard. The system interviews users about a workspace to determine whether and how it is subject to compliance. It tells the user what aspects of the standard apply to them based on their answers. The system has:

♦ Pop-up (hypertext) definitions of keywords and phrases

♦ Sets of frequently asked questions (FAQs) and official interpretation letters

♦ A very readable copy of the regulations, and other help

The most important direct benefit is to the employers, whose timely, accurate access to the information contributes to a safer and healthier workplace, in addition to saving OSHA regulators time, resources, and taxpayer dollars. The online Confined Spaces Advisor logs more than 400 questions each week, a workload that would have required two full-time OSHA Compliance Officers. In the first six months after its online release, the Confined Spaces Standards Advisor was accessed more than 9,000 times.

The program was developed in conjunction with Exsys knowledge automation system development software, and the distribution version of the program uses the Exsys Runtime program core. Use of Exsys products is governed by a license granted by Exsys to the U.S. Department of Labor. The OSHA Permit Spaces Advisor, and many other knowledge automation systems, as online and download versions, are available at:

http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html
(Look for "Expert Advisors")