1.1 Describe the purpose and components of the WHMIS.

In Canada, the national hazard communication system for hazardous products in the workplace is called Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System or WHMIS. This system applies to suppliers, importers, and distributers of any hazardous products that are sold in or imported into Canada with the intention of use, handing and storage in Canadian workplaces. WHMIS also applies to the employers and workers who use these products.

The purpose of WHMIS is to protect the worker from the use, handling and storage of hazardous products in the workplace. Injuries and illnesses may be caused by exposure to hazardous products if there is improper handling and storage or by not understanding the toxicity or hazards of a product. These effects may be immediate or may take days, months or years to appear. Improper handing may also result in these hazardous products being spread to other locations, putting the public at risk. WHMIS provides the tools to communicate to the worker the information that they need about hazardous products, allowing them to take the necessary precautions to protect their health and safety as well as others.

There are four main components that make up WHMIS:

- Hazard identification and classification
- Labelling of hazardous products
- Safety data sheets for hazardous products
- Worker education and training which included both general WHMIS training and specific workplace training