4.1 Explain the purpose of a Safety Data Sheet (SDS)

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are an integral part of the Canada's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS). Label size restricts the quantity of information that can be displayed, but workers have the right to access more information. All available information on the hazardous product can be easily accessed from the SDS.

The SDS is a detailed document containing information about the hazardous product and recommendations on safety precautions. These documents are usually created by the manufacturer or supplier of the product. Every product that is classified as a hazardous product under WHMIS must have a SDS if it is going to be used, handled or stored in a Canadian workplace.

The SDS provides the worker with more detailed hazard information than the supplier label. Information such as the hazards of the product, chemical composition, first aid, handling and emergency response can be found in the document.