



Building Safety Week Lesson Plan Speaker's Notes

Introduction (5 minutes)

Do you ever build with blocks? (Allow time for students to answer.)

Have you ever had somebody bump into your blocks and the whole thing falls over and crashes to the ground? (Allow time for students to answer.)

If you don't want that to happen, what do you do? You try to protect your building, right? How do you do that? (Allow time for students to answer.)

I protect buildings. That's what I do. My name is _____.
I am a Code Official and I work in the (Name of your Building Department)
_____ for the (Name of your Jurisdiction)
_____.

My job is to keep people safe in buildings and prevent them from getting hurt. I help keep people safe by making sure buildings, such as houses, schools, restaurants, churches, stores and other places, are well built and don't fall down or hurt people. By making buildings safer, I prevent people from getting hurt. I am here today to tell you about my job.

To help you understand what I do, I want to begin by asking a few questions.

Who can tell me why we have the Police and Firefighters? (Allow time for students to answer.)

The Police and Firefighters help you when you are in danger of being hurt. For example, Firefighters get called when a house is already on fire.

What would happen if we did not have them? (Allow time for students to answer.) So, the Police and Firefighters make sure our community is safe.

Did you know that Code Officials also keep people safe? The Police, Firefighters and Code Officials all have jobs that help keep you safe. Let me show you the Circle of Safety. ([Show the Circle of Safety](#)).

(Note: As you talk about this paragraph, use hand gestures. When talking about first preventers, put your left hand up and make the shape of one half of a circle. Then, keeping that hand up, talk about first responders and put your right hand up to form the other half of the circle. As you talk about how the two sides work together, bring your hands together to show the kids the Circle of Safety with them right in the middle of the circle. The Circle of Safety needs both halves working together to form the circle.)

This circle shows two kinds of people that help keep you safe every day. These are **first preventers** and **first responders**.

Code Officials are called **first preventers** because they prevent accidents from happening in buildings, such as homes and schools, so that you don't get hurt. They do this by making sure buildings are well built and safe. Code Officials go out before anything bad happens to make sure that buildings, schools and homes are safe and strong. They prevent buildings from falling down or being unsafe.

The Police and Firefighters are called **first responders** because they are the first to respond, or come to help, when there are emergencies like putting out fires, or to arrest someone who is doing something bad. They come to help after something bad has already happened.

Together the **first preventers** and the **first responders** create the Circle of Safety around you and your family by helping to prevent accidents and coming to help you if an accident or emergency happens.

Today we will be talking more about how **first preventers**—the Code Official and Building Department—protect you.

So you might wonder – what is it that I do as a Code Official to help prevent accidents and keep you safe?

We Inspect for Safety (15 minutes)

One of the ways that I keep people safe is by inspecting buildings, such as homes and schools, for safety. To inspect something means that I look at things very carefully and study them to make sure they're right. (Kind of like

your teacher does to check your homework or when your mom makes sure you did a good job brushing your teeth). This means that I look at all the parts of a home being built to make sure they are built safely. Now, I want you to help me with an inspection.

Let me show some pictures and see if you can tell me how they make homes safe.

(Show the picture of the smoke detector).

Who can tell me what this is and what it is for? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** This is a smoke detector. When someone builds a house, I make sure there is a smoke detector in every bedroom. It sounds an alarm to let you and your family know if there is smoke or fire in the house.

(Show the picture of the window). How would this window keep you safe? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** Has your teacher talked to you about what to do if you think there is a fire? If you're in a room and the door is closed, you are supposed to feel the door before you open it and –if it's really hot – don't open it. If you're in your bedroom, and there's a fire outside the door, you would have to get out of your room a different way. Well, because this window is in the bedroom and it's big enough for a person to crawl through, you could go out of this window to escape the fire (if you are on the ground level) and Firefighters could come in to save you if you're on an upper level. One way I keep people safe is by inspecting every bedroom to make sure each one has a window.

(Show the picture of the bathtub). Do you know what the Code Official does to keep you safe in the bathtub? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** When a bathtub is put in a house, I make sure a device is put in that prevents the water from getting too hot. Why? Because when water gets too hot, it can be very dangerous. It can give you a bad burn and we sure don't want that to happen.

(Show the picture of the stairs). What is the safety feature in this picture? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** This stairway has a stair rail. When you walk up and down the steps, always hold on to the stair rail because it helps you balance so you don't slip and fall down the stairs. Stair rails also do something else. They have guards, spaced close together, so that babies cannot stick their heads through and get caught, or crawl between and fall off the side of the stairway. One of the inspections I do is to check new houses to make sure stairways have stair rails and guards.

(Show the picture of the fireplace). Does anyone have a fireplace? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** In the front of a fireplace is a stone or brick area called a hearth. In this picture, the hearth is this area in front of the fireplace. **(Point to the hearth.)** Do you know how the hearth protects you? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** If a burning log rolls out of the fireplace or a spark flies out, it will land on the hearth. This keeps the floor from catching on fire, because the hearth is made of stone and stone does not catch on fire. If the log rolled onto the floor instead of the stone hearth, the floor could catch on fire and set the house on fire. I inspect fireplaces to make sure they have hearths because we definitely don't want that to happen, do we?

(Show the picture of the pool). How would this fence keep you safe? **(Allow time for students to answer.)** The fence helps keep children from getting into the pool when a grownup isn't around. Children who go into pools by themselves without an adult present could get hurt or even drown so never go swimming without an adult to watch you. Fences are another thing I check when I'm doing an inspection.

You did a great job inspecting these pictures for different safety features. Now you know some of the things that the Code Official and Building Department look for that keep you safe in and around your home.

Let's Have Another Look (5 minutes)

Let's review what we just learned about inspecting for safety. To inspect something means to look at it carefully to make sure it's done right. Turn to the person next to you and tell them three things that Code Officials inspect to keep your house safe. I just went over six different things, so see if you can name all six things between the two of you. **(Give students a few minutes for discussion.)**

Now that you know how to inspect for safety, you can go home and do an inspection in your house or apartment. Look for the things we just talked about and talk to your parents about how those safety features keep you and your family safe.

Directions For Making Buildings Safe (10 minutes)

Now let's talk about how the Code Official knows what to inspect. Everything a Code Official needs to know about making your home safe is written in a book. This big book is called the Building Code. **(Show the**

Building Code. Pass it around to the kids, if time allows.) It's a book of directions or rules to help make sure buildings are safe. Every time I go out to help someone who is building a house, putting on a new roof, adding an extra room, or putting in a new window, I can look in my Building Code. I also can show it to people so they can see how to build things the right way so that their house is safe.

There are other people who contribute to making sure buildings are built safely. Architects draw the pictures to show how a building should be built. Engineers make sure that all of the different parts of the building will fit together and work correctly. Builders build the buildings using hammers, nails, bricks, wood and other materials. All of these people do their part to help build safe buildings. But it is the Code Official that makes sure that the Architect, Engineer and Builder follow the rules in the Building Code so that your home and school are safe places for you to live and learn.

What are Building Materials – The Three Little Pigs Activity (15 minutes)

(Ask teacher to put students in groups of four students.)

Now let's talk about something else the Code Official does to keep people safe. First, I want to pass out a few things. Look at these items. See if you can tell me how they are different from each other.

(Pass out one kind of building material to each group, such as plastic pipe, wood, brick, etc. Make sure the pieces are light weight, and easy to hold and pass around. Give the groups a few minutes to look at materials.)

Do you know what these items are used for? These are all materials that are used to build houses. Can you tell me how they are different from each other?

(After each group shares about a material, give a brief explanation about what it is and how it is used. Let the students know that the Code Official makes sure only safe materials are used to build their homes to keep them safe.)

Who remembers the story of the Three Little Pigs? (Allow time for students to answer.) What did each of the pigs use to build their houses? Here's a hint, each pig used a different building material. (Allow the students to answer. If they don't know, help them answer straw, sticks and bricks.)

So what happened when the Wolf came along? (Allow the students to answer.) Why did two of the pigs houses get blown down? (Allow the students to answer.)

The Wolf huffed and puffed and blew their houses down, because their houses were not well built. Their homes fell down because the first two pigs used straw and sticks to build their homes, and straw and sticks are not very strong or safe things to build a house out of. The third pig used bricks and bricks are strong. The strong bricks helped to keep the third pig safe.

In real life, houses can be made out many different kinds of materials, not just bricks. As a Code Official, I make sure people build with the materials correctly so the houses are good and strong, and will keep people safe. (Collect the materials)

We Are Almost Done Now (10 minutes)

As you see, there are a lot of things the Code Official and the Building Department do to make buildings and homes safe and protect families. Let's review things we went over today in class.

(Review – We Inspect for Safety)

One of the ways I keep you safe is by doing safety inspections. I make sure that there are smoke alarms, which let you know if there is smoke in the house. I also inspect new houses to see that they have windows in every bedroom so people can get out if there is a fire. I also check to that there are guard rails on the stairs to keep people from slipping or falling down. These are just a few of the things I look at during my job. There are many, many others.

(Review – Instructions for Making Buildings Safe)

Everything I inspect is in a book called the Building Code. The Building Code is a book of directions or rules that help the Code Official and the Building Department make sure that homes are safe.

(Review – what are Building Materials – the Three Little Pigs)

Another way that I help protect people is by making sure that the right materials are used to build homes to make them strong. We don't want homes to fall down like the two pigs whose houses were made of straw and sticks.

Wrap-up

I have had a great time coming in and talking with you today about keeping buildings safe. You all have been really fun and very enthusiastic.

Now that you know more about building safety, I want to invite each of you to become a part of my Building Safety Team – just like the Architect, Engineer and Builder.

As a member of my team, it will be your job to help me protect others by making sure homes and buildings are safe. Please share what you learned today with your family so they can learn about building safety too.

I have some things that I would like to give you.

First is the Building Safety Team Pledge – this shows that you are part of the Building Safety Team and can help make sure homes are safe.

[\(Distribute copies of the Pledge.\)](#)

I am also going to leave your teacher with a copy of CODiE the Cougar's Building Safety Activity Book for each of you. [\(Show CODiE activity book.\)](#)

This book has fun activities and coloring pages which will help you to learn even more about building safety. CODiE is our mascot – and is the leader of his own Building Safety Team. You will be introduced to CODiE's Building Safety Team in this activity book. This book also includes a checklist to help you inspect your own house and a certificate that you can fill out so you can be a part of CODiE's Building Safety Team. [\(Show checklist and certificate in back of CODiE book.\)](#)

Along with this activity book you will also receive a pencil to complete the checklist and a Building Safety Team Badge that you can wear to show people that you are an official member of the Building Safety Team. [\(Show pencils and stickers.\)](#)

Now that you're all part of the Building Safety Team, you can take your CODiE activity book, sticker and pencil home and share them with your family so they can learn about building safety.

It was great meeting you. Thank you for helping Code Officials like me protect people and make the world a safer place for everyone.