



Tiffany Seeger sews together fabric to make a mask in Newport News Shipbuilding's Sail Loft. Photo by Matt Hildreth

Sail Loft Answers the Call



When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidance that encouraged Americans to wear masks and face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19, a group of shipbuilders sprang into action.

Newport News Shipbuilding's Sail Loft typically produces materials like containments and refueling tents. But this week, making masks for fellow shipbuilders using T-shirts and leftover fabric became a top priority. "It's been pretty hectic, but we've got a good team and everyone is pulling together and doing what we've got to do," said General Foreman **Jesse Wyatt**.

NNS President **Jennifer Boykin** said the company is purchasing masks for all employees, but demand is high and supplies are running low across the country. That's why Sail Loft shipbuilders like **Tiffany Seeger** are working to make thousands of masks in the meantime that can be distributed to employees across the shipyard.

"It's a blessing to have this skill because you're making something that could save lives and help prevent the spread of something that could be detrimental to a lot of families," Seeger said, as she sewed together pieces of fabric to make a mask. "It's an honor because you're making a difference."

Seeger, who has a background in nursing, said she was surprised when she found out she would be sewing masks. "But at the same time, I was happy because I knew it was going to give the shipbuilders peace of mind and make them feel safer," she said.

Alex Holloway, who also works in the Sail Loft, said he didn't expect to become a mask maker either. "This is something very important for the type of situation that we're in and what's going on around the world," he said. "I feel like the company is doing a great job of protecting its shipbuilders."

Boxes of T-shirts – including some donated by the United Steelworkers union – were brought to the Sail Loft. Wyatt said shipbuilders in other shops also helped cut up some of the shirts. By Tuesday afternoon, shipbuilders had made more than 5,000 masks to be distributed by leaders across the company. Shipbuilders who receive cloth masks should take them home and wash them every day.

"It takes everybody," Wyatt said. "It is a collective effort. That's how we get these ships built and keep everyone safe."

Watch a video on MyNNS. To learn more about CDC guidelines and COVID-19 updates at NNS, visit nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411.

Remembering USS *Thresher*

Friday, April 10, marks the 57th anniversary of the tragic sinking of the submarine USS *Thresher*. Although *Thresher* wasn't built at Newport News Shipbuilding, it is a reminder of the importance of what shipbuilders do every day.

NNS will hold a moment of silence and sound the shipyard whistle at 9:15 a.m. Friday for 57 seconds to remember the 129 lives lost aboard USS *Thresher*. Watch a video message from NNS President **Jennifer Boykin** on MyNNS or on the NNS to Go app.

Use Hand Sanitizers with Caution

Newport News Shipbuilding employees are urged to take steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, shipbuilders need to be aware that alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be a fire hazard when in close proximity to hot work.

Hand sanitizer exceeds 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol alcohol by volume. Alcohol is extremely flammable and a controlled liquid at NNS that must be handled thoughtfully, according to NNS Fire Chief **Mark McTheny**.

“This is a reminder that we should not overlook safety or fire hazards that affect our personal safety while focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said. “During this time of heightened awareness to flu-like symptoms, we should not forget there are other hazards that can cause harm while on the job. Working safely

is the goal of all shipbuilders.”

NNS’ Fire Prevention and Control Manual outlines requirements for alcohol products used at the shipyard. In accordance with the manual, there are restrictions for employees working shipboard operations and near hotwork. These employees’ personal hand sanitizers are restricted to no more than two bottles of less than 2 fluid ounces. In addition, they can’t be left unattended and, if stored, must be kept in a shielded metal storage such as a tool box or metal desk drawer.

Shipbuilders are encouraged to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance to maintain social distancing when possible, wash or sanitize their hands frequently and refrain from touching their faces.

ALEX Helps Employees Pick Benefit Plans

To help prepare for annual enrollment (April 20 – May 1), Huntington Ingalls Industries’ ALEX online decision support tool can help employees and their families choose benefit plans that best meet their health needs. ALEX asks simple questions about health care and other benefit needs and recommends HII benefits that fit your personal situation. All answers are anonymous and confidential.

Employees can use ALEX to review potential savings from HII’s

medical plans, tax savings from flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and more. ALEX also provides an overview of HII’s Tobacco Free Incentive program. This year, United Steelworkers, guards and salaried employees must update their tobacco-use status to “tobacco-free” during annual enrollment to save \$660 on their medical insurance if they do not use tobacco.

To use ALEX, visit www.myalex.com/hii/2020/hiibenefits.

NNS Supports WIDGHR Industry Day

Representatives from Newport News Shipbuilding Supply Chain Management attended the Women in Defense Greater Hampton Roads (WIDGHR) Industry Day in February. NNS supported the event as a sponsor, exhibitor and panel participant.

Industry Day provided an environment for networking, education and professional development as it connected small business owners with representatives from federal and local governments as well as commercial business industries. **Nicole Ellis** (O51) represented NNS on the Federal Prime Contractors panel, and members of the NNS Small Business Office (O55) worked the exhibit table. Over 14 exhibitors and 120 individuals attended the event.

Topics of discussion included: preparing small businesses for business with large organizations; explaining how to become a new supplier; describing supplier development programs to support success; sharing opportunities for engagement and reasons for disengagement; the importance of quality products and meeting delivery schedules.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive and WIDGHR is already planning an Industry Day for 2021. NNS intends to support next year’s event as a sponsor, exhibitor and panel participant, if requested.

Shuttle Available for Employees with COVID-19 Symptoms

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues, employees who show symptoms while at work and need to leave are asked not to use the shipyard bus and shuttle services. Instead, they are encouraged to call the designated COVID-19 shuttle to take them to the gate or an NNS shuttle stop – not to their personal vehicles.

Those who seek to ride the designated shuttle should dial the following numbers:

- 4:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (757) 621-6067 or (757) 262-6191
- 4:30 p.m. to 4:30 a.m. (757) 375-5481

The shuttle is disinfected frequently and power washed every weekend.

NNS SAFETY REPORT

Compared to figures from March 2019

