

# CURRENTS

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Apprentices maintain social distance while taking online classes in The Apprentice School gym. Photo by Matt Hildreth

## Apprentice School Classes Go Online

When Apprentice School Director **Latitia McCane** decided to offer classes online to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and turn the plan around in two weeks, she was sure her staff would think she was crazy.

“I told them we can make this happen, and everything will be OK,” McCane said.

She knew it would be challenging at first, but once the faculty was trained, McCane was confident online classes would be a positive solution. Classes have been back in session for three weeks. “Faculty is telling me now, ‘We thought you were out of your mind, but now that we are actually in it, we really like it,’” McCane said.

She gives the credit for getting online classes up and running so quickly to United Steelworkers Local 8888, Labor Relations, IT and Security.

All students have the opportunity to learn from home rather than campus if they choose. They need internet access and textbooks as if they were attending classes as usual.

The school is still open for those who want to come in and use the facilities. “Some just can’t get the internet access they need or may not have a quiet environment to work at home, so we are here,” McCane said.

Apprentice **Michael Creel** is one of those students. He lives with three other people and has an “iffy” Wi-Fi connection. “My first thought was what is going to distract me? The people I live with, the internet signal that drops every night? And what if I miss a lecture?” he said.

Creel meets with a handful of other students in The Apprentice School gym for class several times a week. They are spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart and all use headphones to listen to individual livestreamed lectures, taking notes and typing in questions.

“It’s going better than I expected. There is definitely a learning curve for both students and teachers,” Creel said.

Apprentice School Craft Instructor **Jimmy Jessup** thinks the new way of teaching has pushed the school into a place it may not have experienced for many years to come. “This has forced us to go to the next level where before maybe it was something we would look at five years down the line,” he said.

For hands-on training in the shipyard, Jessup points out that “teaching a welder how to weld can’t be done online.” However, there are plans in place. When social distancing is not available, PPE like face masks are used to keep shipbuilders safe and in line with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

“This experience has made all of us think outside the box,” Jessup said.

## NNS to Check Temperatures at Entry Points

In a message to shipbuilders on Tuesday, April 21, Newport News Shipbuilding President **Jennifer Boykin** announced the company would soon begin conducting temperature monitoring prior to entry into shipyard facilities as soon as possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Boykin said shipbuilders would learn more about the plan as details are finalized. She also said NNS continues to make, purchase and distribute cloth face coverings and plans to distribute 10,000 per week. To learn more about PPE efforts at the shipyard, watch a video on NNS’ website, the NNS to Go app or Boykin’s Facebook page. Employees can email [ideas@hii-nns.com](mailto:ideas@hii-nns.com) with ideas or feedback regarding the company’s COVID-19 response.

## Benefits Annual Enrollment Continues

Benefits annual enrollment runs through Friday, May 1, for Newport News Shipbuilding employees. Shipbuilders can make changes to their benefits and update their tobacco-use status on UPoint by visiting [www.hiibenefits.com](http://www.hiibenefits.com) or by calling the Huntington Ingalls Benefits Center (HIBC) at 1-877-216-3222.

## New Shift Schedule Spurs Changes for Commuters

Shipbuilders who use Hampton Roads Transit or carpool to and from Newport News Shipbuilding will soon have options tailored to the company's new standard shifts, which begin May 4.

NNS' Parking and Transportation team is working with HRT to modify bus route schedules that will support the new shifts schedules. NNS will communicate new information when made available. HRT will also post updates on its website ([www.gohrt.com](http://www.gohrt.com)).

Many private van pools have reduced ridership to support social distancing, leaving many employees unable to group ride. Shipbuilders can connect with other employees looking to ride share by posting their requests on the MyNNS Parking and Transportation website. This information is internal to protect employees' personal contact information. Another option is to use Commute with Enterprise. For more information on Commute with Enterprise, call (804) 647-3156.

Employees who use public transportation or participate in ride share programs are encouraged to maintain rigorous cleaning practices and wear masks and gloves to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Workers' Memorial Day is April 28

Workers' Memorial Day is observed every year on April 28 to remember and honor workers around the world who lost their lives, were injured or became ill on the job.

As Newport News Shipbuilding practices social distancing and other measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, there will not be a ceremony to commemorate Workers' Memorial Day. Instead, NNS will display wreaths at major entry points during the week of April 28.

When shipbuilders see one of the wreaths, they should take a moment to reflect on the significance of Workers' Memorial Day and commit to making good, safe decisions; looking out for others; and speaking up when they see something unsafe.

## Child Care Resources for Shipbuilders

The upcoming shift change has raised child care concerns for some Newport News Shipbuilding employees.

The YMCA of the Virginia Peninsulas offers emergency child care for essential personnel at several of its centers for children ages 5-12. The YMCA will consider accommodating the schedules of impacted NNS employees if there is sufficient demand. Locations include Newport News, Hampton, Smithfield and York County. Interested employees can contact Maureen Savage at [Maureen.Savage@ymcavp.org](mailto:Maureen.Savage@ymcavp.org).

Southside YMCA locations also are willing to open early to support NNS families, if demand exists. Interested shipbuilders should visit [nns.huntingtoningalls.com/YMCA-Survey](http://nns.huntingtoningalls.com/YMCA-Survey) to complete a form. YMCA staff will follow up directly with those who complete the form.

## Don't Forget to Enter Your Time

As the work environment evolves for many, Newport News Shipbuilding employees are reminded that time-charging policies and procedures have not changed. Even if they are working from home or working a variable schedule or alternate shift, employees must enter their time in an accurate and timely manner, according to the primary timekeeping policy, SSO 10-403.

For questions related to time charging, employees should contact their foreman/supervisor, Labor Compliance (O73) at 534-4147 or visit the O73 Labor Compliance MyNNS website.

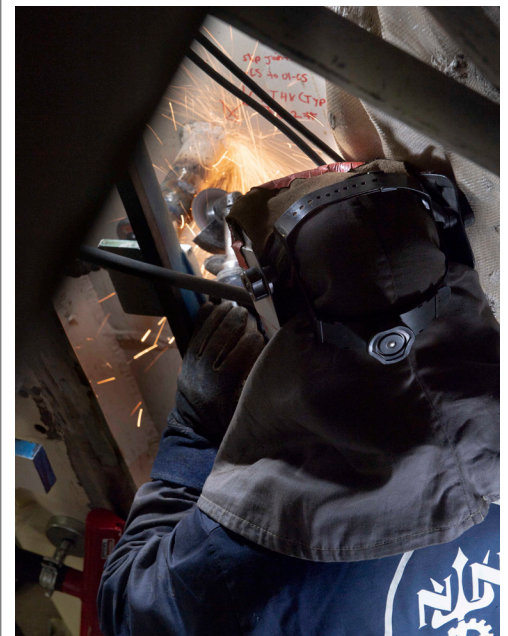
## COVID-19 Website Updates

Newport News Shipbuilding has updated its COVID-19 updates website ([nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411](http://nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411)). From the homepage, shipbuilders can select the NNS Resources button on the right side. The resources page includes information about protecting yourself; pay and benefits; leave and work arrangements; quarantine and return to work; and opportunities for community outreach.

## Shipbuilders Make Masks

After the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released guidelines recommending the use of masks to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, Newport News Shipbuilding employees got creative and made their own.

Take a look at some of the masks shipbuilders created to protect themselves and their co-workers in a photo slideshow on NNS' website.



Eric Knight grinds on advanced lower stage weapons elevator aboard USS *Gerald R. Ford*. U.S. Navy photo

## Another Milestone for CVN 78

The U.S. Navy announced the certification of a fifth advanced weapons elevator aboard USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78) this week. Read more on the Navy's website.