

# CURRENTS

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A shipbuilder disinfects toolboxes between first and second shifts. Photo by Matt Hildreth

## NNS' COVID-19 Response Moves into New Phase

In a letter to employees on Tuesday, May 5, Newport News Shipbuilding President **Jennifer Boykin** announced that while liberal leave for COVID-19 will end May 18, the company will begin offering a COVID-19 unpaid leave of absence.

“When news of COVID-19 first broke, no one knew the extent of the virus’ impact. Today, we are better informed about preventative measures, and we continue to find ways to safely continue our mission-essential work. We also recognize this crisis will have long-lasting effects,” Boykin wrote.

To continue providing flexibility for shipbuilders, NNS is offering a COVID-19 unpaid leave of absence, which allows an employee to take unpaid time off knowing they will still have a job when they return. Requests for COVID-19 unpaid leaves of absence must be submitted before May 18. More information about the COVID-19 unpaid leave of absence – including how it impacts compensation and benefits – is available at [nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411](https://nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411).

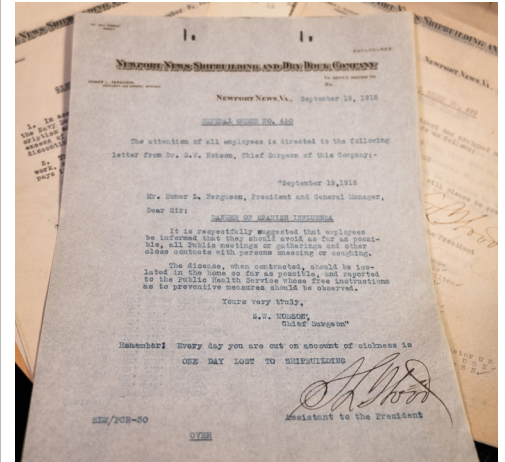
NNS also instituted other changes related to COVID-19 at the beginning of the week. A new, more balanced two-shift schedule began Monday, with cleaning and sanitizing taking place between shifts. Temperature screenings also began at entry gates. As a reminder, face coverings are required for temperature screenings and entry into NNS.

“COVID-19 has forced a difficult balancing act on all of us. I’m confident that together, we will strike the right balance of taking care of each other and meeting our operational commitments so that we come out of this pandemic even stronger than before,” Boykin wrote.

## NOTICE: PPE Required During Lunch

Due to the recent shift change, there is no longer a standard lunch time for all employees. To ensure everyone’s safety, PPE is required in production areas at all times during the shift, even during an employee’s observed lunch time.

As a reminder, face coverings are required for all individuals entering Newport News Shipbuilding. Individuals should be wearing a face covering before getting into the temperature screening line. Those without a face covering will be denied entry into the shipyard beginning, Friday, May 8. NNS will still have masks available for employees in industrial vending machines and toolrooms.



This Sept. 19, 1918, memo to NNS President Homer L. Ferguson warned shipbuilders about the dangers of the Spanish flu. It included advice from the company’s chief surgeon to “avoid as far as possible, all public meetings or gatherings and other close contacts with persons sneezing or coughing.” Photo by Aaron Pritchett

## COVID-19 is Not NNS’ First Pandemic

In 1918, Newport News Shipbuilding employees simultaneously faced two challenges – the Spanish flu pandemic and providing ships for the United States as the country fought in World War I.

Watch a video on MyNNS to learn how the company responded to the pandemic more than 100 years ago, and how it relates to the measures in place today to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

## Foundry Women's Council Sees Success



The Foundry Women's Council was established last year as part of Newport News Shipbuilding's commitment to inclusion and diversity.

The goal of the council – which includes women who either work in or support the Foundry or the Pattern Shop – is to encourage more women to work in the Foundry, provide a venue to discuss opportunities with management, mentor new hires and transfers in the Foundry, and elevate engagement among the group.

Although it's relatively new, the council has already yielded positive results, according to participants like **Jessica Nieghbors**.

“The Foundry Women's Council was an essential outlet to assist with incorporating women in a majority male area. The council has provided women a seat at the table and has heavily influenced opening different doors of opportunities, lines of communication and engagement,” she said.

Last fall, the Foundry Women's Council held its first meeting. Since then, the council has worked with management for essential modifications to promote an



Members of the Foundry Women's Council pose for a photo in the Foundry. Note: this photo was taken before the implementation of social distancing guidelines. Photo by **Matt Hildreth**

inclusive workplace for women. There also has been a significant increase in the number of craftswomen in the Foundry.

“I have been fortunate to work with many impressive women in manufacturing and construction at NNS who inspired me to establish the Foundry Women's Council,” said Foundry Superintendent **Kenton Meland**. “The purpose of the council is to empower women in the Foundry and Pattern Shop to improve opportunities while making these shops more desirable places for women to choose to work. They each have unique experiences to leverage in order to make improvements for current and future employees.”

## NOTICE: Employees Must Update Tobacco-Use Status

During annual enrollment, United Steelworkers, guards and salaried employees were set to “tobacco user” for Huntington Ingalls Industries benefits.

Employees who do not use tobacco or have completed a tobacco cessation program must update their tobacco-use status to “tobacco

free” by June 30 to save \$660 annually on their medical insurance for the upcoming benefit plan year.

Employees can update their tobacco-use status online by logging into UPoint from [www.hiibenefits.com](http://www.hiibenefits.com) or by calling the Huntington Ingalls Benefits Center at 1-877-216-3222.

## Register for Learning After the Whistle (L.A.W.) Classes



Looking to grow your communications skills in 2020? Do you desire to develop the mindset of an effective leader at NNS? Or does your résumé need a little lift? If so, Learning After the Whistle (L.A.W.) is back.

L.A.W. is a program offered by Newport News Shipbuilding's Leadership and Organization Development Department (O44) as an opportunity for all employees to grow personally and professionally. Taught by NNS' most knowledgeable instructors and subject matter experts, courses such as Strengthsfinder®, Leadership Essentials, Finance for Non-Financial Managers and many more are offered to all employees at no cost.

To register, visit Learning Exchange (LX) and perform an advanced search for “LAW.” Most L.A.W. courses are offered in the evenings in Bldg. 903-7. Required books and materials are provided, and social distancing guidelines will be followed. As a reminder, attendance is on the employee's own time, and no time charge will be provided.

For additional information, visit the L.A.W. website on MyNNS. For questions about this program, contact **Renita Jones** (O44) at 688-0384 or email [LearningAftertheWhistle@hii-nns.com](mailto:LearningAftertheWhistle@hii-nns.com).