



Photo by Aaron Pritchett

The “New Normal”

From mandatory face coverings to new shifts and temperature checks, the COVID-19 pandemic led to big changes to operations at Newport News Shipbuilding, at least for the short term.

Many of the changes have been implemented by the COVID-19 Crisis Action Group (CAG), a select group of seasoned leaders from across the shipyard focused on resolving the safety concerns shipbuilders raise.

“COVID-19 has triggered a lot of changes in the past eight weeks, and they’ve all been made with shipbuilders’ health and welfare in mind,” said CAG member **Bob Meyer**, who is also construction director for the *Virginia* Class Submarine Program. “Our shipbuilders’ overall response has been positive, and we’ve received some great comments and suggestions that we are trying to incorporate as best we can. If we can all continue to do our part to help stop the spread of the virus, we’ll come out of this pandemic a stronger shipbuilding community.”

Recent changes include:

Two-shift schedule: In early May, NNS transitioned to a more balanced two-shift schedule. First shift is now 6 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., and second shift is 6 p.m. until 2:30 a.m. The break between provides an opportunity to clean and sanitize touchpoints across the facility. As a result of the new shift schedule, no-drive times have also been adjusted. No-drive times are now 2:20 until 2:40 p.m. and 2:20 until 2:40 a.m.

Temperature screenings: Everyone entering NNS’ gates

is required to undergo a temperature screening. Those with temperatures of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher are denied entry.

Face coverings: Shipbuilders are required to wear face coverings if they are within 6 feet of another person. Face coverings should also be worn in transit (including before and after work), in line for services and in common areas. As a reminder face coverings should be worn properly and cover the employee’s mouth and nose. Employees should also practice social distancing when possible.

Parking: All NNS parking spaces will remain open for use except spaces reserved for expecting mothers, handicap spaces, government spaces, and spaces assigned to the HII Family Health Center and privately owned lots.

New lunch schedule: There are no longer standard lunch times for all employees. Shipbuilders should check with their supervisor for their specific lunch time. PPE is required in production areas at all times during the shift, even during lunch time.

Working from home: Employees who are interested in working from home should reach out to their supervisor to ensure that a work-from-home arrangement is still the best option. If employees have additional questions regarding teleworking/working from home, they should contact their supervisor or Human Resources business partner.

A printable one-page guide describing these changes is available on MyNNS. For more information about NNS’ COVID-19 response, visit nns.huntingtoningalls.com/411.

NOTICE

Beginning next week, *Currents* will return to a once-per-week publication schedule.



An American flag flies above Newport News Shipbuilding. Photo by Matt Hildreth

Monday is Memorial Day

On Memorial Day, and every day, we honor the service and sacrifice of the men and women who gave their lives in defense of our nation and our liberty. Look for an ad in the *Daily Press* and *The Virginian-Pilot* from Huntington Ingalls Industries honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

NNS Withdrawing from VPP Star Program

Newport News Shipbuilding is withdrawing from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). NNS President **Jennifer Boykin** announced the move in a message to employees on Wednesday, May 20.

"After careful consideration, and in light of the fatality we experienced last summer, we made the decision to withdraw from the program at this time. While safety will always remain at the forefront of everything we do, we have work to do to reestablish the safety culture and program our employees deserve," Boykin wrote.

NNS has been certified as a VPP Star worksite for the past 25 years. Star status is the highest seal of approval OSHA gives to a worksite in recognition of its safety programs and practices.

The company is taking action to improve the safety culture, including:

- Establishing an executive sponsor to support reapplication efforts.
- Introducing new technologies that will enhance employee involvement, hazard prevention and training.
- Continuing EH&S Task Teams, which have proven to be a vital part of NNS' safety program.
- Expanding the ideas@hii-nns.com mailbox beyond suggestions related to COVID-19, so NNS leaders can hear additional suggestions from shipbuilders about overall safety.

Boykin said the company is already planning to reapply to VPP in 2021.

High School Robotics Program Awards Shipbuilder

Shipbuilder **Chris Brown** (O35) received the *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Chesapeake Volunteer of the Year Award via a ceremony on YouTube. The awards are usually presented in person, but the organization used the online platform to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

FIRST Chesapeake designs and hosts robotics challenges for high school students in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. It recognized Brown's work as a team mentor, event volunteer, and advocate to increase the number of volunteers from Newport News Shipbuilding. He continues to help keep *FIRST* Robotics programs in the community spotlight and build the future workforce.

"My intention is to lead these students to careers at Newport News Shipbuilding," he said. "No matter what their duty is on the team, it relates to a job at the shipyard. Every student brings a passionate skill to the team."

Brown said he is grateful for the more than 100 NNS volunteers who help with *FIRST* Chesapeake.

L.E.A.R.N. to Host Virtual After-Work Event

The L.E.A.R.N. Program and the Asian Shipbuilders Including All Nationalities (ASIAN) employee resource group are hosting an after-work presentation with **Keisha Pexton**, director of Learning and Workforce Development, via WebEx from 3:30 until 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, June 2. The event is open to all employees by reservation only. Sign-up on the L.E.A.R.N. website on MyNNS. For questions, contact **Tanika Vasquez** (E08) at 688-7916, **Chris Porro** (E47) at 534-0332, or email LEARN@hii-nns.com.

REMINDER: Verify Dependents to Keep Benefits

Newport News Shipbuilding employees who need to verify their dependents to maintain their benefits must submit verification documents by June 17.

Employees subject to verification should have received a letter in the mail with details on acceptable documentation and the submission process. Documents may be submitted online through UPoint at www.hiibenefits.com, by fax or by mail. Failure to verify dependents by June 17 will result in the cancellation of benefits on July 1.

For questions regarding dependent verification, call the Huntington Ingalls Benefits Center at 1-877-216-3222.