

# SMALLTALK

about big ideas

Together We Can Make a Difference

By Jennifer Boykin

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It seems like every time I turn on the news or read online media headlines, I find the latest story about workplace violence. It hit way too close to home on May 31 when 12 people lost their lives at the hands of a Virginia Beach employee with a gun.

One article I read described the painstaking task of collecting sentimental items that were left at makeshift memorials for the victims. What struck me was the article's reference to the shooting as "the most significant event in the history of Virginia Beach."

This is not the history we want to make at Newport News Shipbuilding.

While I reserve *SmallTalk* as a means to share positive messages that reinforce our shipbuilders' important work, this recent tragedy is too important to overlook. Every day, more than 40,000 people – including employees, contractors and customers – enter our facilities. It would be naive to think that what happened in Virginia Beach couldn't happen here.

**Your safety is my No. 1 priority** – where ever you may be. While you're at work, I want you to know that we do everything we can to keep you safe. Our robust security team is equipped with a wealth of expertise in responding to crisis situations. And while we have not held active shooter drills companywide, the security team trains regularly with outside law enforcement agencies to prepare should such a crisis happen here.

But like shipbuilding, safety takes everyone working together. We've built a strong security culture, and we must remain vigilant in keeping our eyes and ears open to suspicious activity or coworker behavior that is out of the norm, and reporting it immediately. Our best defense is you – our shipbuilders.

When is the last time you considered the location of your workspace and your escape route in case of an emergency? What items do you have within arm's reach that could be used to block an entry or fight off an intruder? Where is the closest secure location?

It's upsetting that we must ask ourselves these questions, but it's a necessity in the world we are living in today. Equally important is awareness of available resources, such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The confidential program is designed to help employees and their family members work through personal challenges, and there's no shame in needing a helping hand.

By now, you should have participated in a security discussion with your teams. From now on, this will be an annual discussion to coincide with the anniversary of the Virginia Beach tragedy – but it should not be the only one. I encourage everyone to discuss safety regularly both at home and at work. There's simply nothing more important.

The Virginia Beach shooting is a solemn reminder that people are the heart of every organization. Your stories, your spirit and your strength have defined Newport News Shipbuilding for the last 133 years – and that's the history we want to continue making at Newport News Shipbuilding.



## Be prepared.

In case of emergency, program these numbers in your mobile phone:

- NNS Emergency Line: \*911 or 380-2222
- "In case of emergency" contact
- Employee Assistance Program: 1-855-400-9185
- Your Human Resources Business Partner