



# NATCA INSIDER

## July 21, 2017 // Cell Phone Courtesy Month a Reminder to Turn Off and Tune In

July is National Cell Phone Courtesy Month and a chance to reflect on the danger posed by electronic distractions. The Turn Off Tune In program has raised awareness about the dangers of electronic distractions — specifically in the air traffic control environment. No text message, phone call, or notification is worth the risk of endangering the flying public or compromising the safety of the National Airspace System (NAS).

Push notifications, alerts, and messages draw our attention, but even the presence of a phone can distract us. Research among college students found that when a mobile phone was visible, a test group performed various motor skills worse than the group that was not in the presence of a phone. **Source:** [Social Psychology](#)

The cognitive impact goes further. Distractions reduce our ability to see information in our environment by 50 percent, leading to “inattentive blindness” or tunnel vision where when we’re distracted not all environmental factors are processed by our brain when we’re distracted. **Source:** [National Safety Council](#)

Cumulatively, the effects of distractions lead to a 10 percent drop in IQ in a given moment — a drop equal to the impact of losing a full night of sleep and more than double the effect of drugs and alcohol on the brain. **Source:** [Harvard Business Review](#)

These stats make it clear why we must continue to keep mobile distractions out of the operating environment. We need to continue to work together to maintain the highest levels of professionalism. Positive discussions, education, and continued awareness about why we need to turn off distractions and tune in to safety can help to make your facility safer and maintain an operation free of electronic distractions.

Visit the [Turn Off Tune In campaign's website](#) for resources and to learn more.

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