

FACTS ABOUT OUR USE OF FACIAL RECOGNITION

We use facial recognition (FR) in some of our stores as part of our commitment to keeping our teams and customers safe by keeping previous offenders out.

You can find a list of our stores that use FR here: <https://www.foodstuffs.co.nz/news-room/facial-recognition>.

We understand people may have questions or concerns about our use of this technology. This fact sheet addresses common topics and explains how FR is used, and the safeguards we have put in place.

Concern	Fact
1. “FR identifies everyone”	FR works by matching, in real time, the faces of people who enter a store against that store’s record of offenders (being individuals who have previously been trespassed from that store or have engaged in harmful behaviour that would warrant a trespass notice being issued). Accomplices that have actively assisted an offender are also enrolled in the FR system.
2. “Images are saved indefinitely.”	All images of people entering a store are deleted automatically and almost immediately unless the FR system detects a match with an accuracy level of at least 93% against an image in that store’s FR system’s record of offenders and accomplices. Only images of offenders and their accomplices are kept in the FR system.
3. “People will be enrolled for petty crimes.”	Only offenders, and their accomplices, are enrolled into that store’s record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system. The inclusion of offenders and accomplices in the FR system is done by specially trained store team members according to strict criteria. To be enrolled into the FR system as an offender, someone usually has to have been threatening, violent or aggressive, offended multiple times, tried to steal a significant amount of product, or committed a crime.
4. “People will be punished indefinitely.”	Images and related data of offenders are kept in the store’s FR system for up to a maximum of two years, with the images of accomplices being stored for a shorter period. After these time periods, the image and related data are automatically deleted from the FR system.
5. “Hackers can steal identities.”	The store’s FR system extracts facial features from a photo and converts them into an alphanumeric computer code called a biometric template. The biometric template is anonymous and cannot be reverse-engineered back into a photo. All FR system data is securely stored.

Concern	Fact
6. “Images will be shared with other places and you’ll use them for other purposes.”	No information stored in the FR system is shared between stores, and no information from the FR system is shared with third parties unless this is required by law, to operate the FR system, or to ensure the store complies with its legal obligations.
7. “Images are saved in a big databank.”	Images are not stored in a centralised databank. No information stored in the FR system is shared between stores, and no information from the FR systems is shared with third parties unless this is required by law, to operate the FR system, or to ensure the store complies with its legal obligations.
8. “You’re keeping images of kids and young people.”	No images of minors (being people under the age of 18) or vulnerable people are enrolled into a store’s record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system.
9. “Innocent people might be wrongly identified.”	The store’s FR system must detect a 93% facial match. If a store’s FR system detects a match with an accuracy level of 93% between the face of a person entering the store with that of someone in the store’s record of offenders and accomplices within the FR system, an alert will be sent to the store’s specially trained members. Two of these team members will then need to agree that it’s a match before a match detected by the FR system is acted on.
10. “FR is racially biased.”	The FR system has been trained on images of people that are similar to the New Zealand population – this reduces the risk of bias in the technology as much as reasonably possible. To further reduce the risk of bias, where the FR system detects a match, two of our specially trained store team members will still need to agree that it’s a match before a match detected by the FR system is acted on.
11. “Police can access the system.”	Stores don’t share any information from their FR system with the police unless they are compelled to do so by law.
12. “Store staff can see who’s on it.”	The FR system is subject to strict access controls, with only authorised and specially trained Foodstuffs North Island and store team members having access. These team members are required to keep information confidential.

If you have any questions

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