

FACTS ABOUT OUR USE OF FACIAL RECOGNITION

What’s happening

Everyone in New Zealand has the right to a safe workplace and a safe place to shop.

However, we’re finding the same people keep offending and targeting our stores – even if they’ve previously been trespassed from the store.

That’s why we ran an independently designed and evaluated trial to see if using facial recognition, or FR for short, can help us better ID them if they try to return, so we can safely and quickly remove these people from the store, making our stores safer for everyone.

The preliminary findings from the trial indicate the use of FR in the 25 trial stores was effective in reducing serious harm – assaults, incidents of verbal abuse and incidents of disorderly conduct – by repeat offenders.

As such, the stores that trialled FR are continuing to use the technology to reduce serious harm by repeat offenders, at least until Foodstuffs North Island (the co-operative behind the North Island PAK’nSAVE and New World stores) receives the final findings from the trial and makes a subsequent decision on any longer term use of FR.

We understand people might have concerns about our use of FR. Below are 12 common themes - and the facts about these.

Concern	Fact
1. “Facial recognition 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 are deleted automatically and immediately unless the image matches with 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. 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 of offenders are kept in the store’s FR system for up to two years with the images of accomplices being stored for a shorter period.

Concern	Fact
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. This code is anonymous so cannot be reverse-engineered back into a photo. Both the images and this code are securely stored.
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 90% facial match. If a store's FR system matches 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, two of our specially trained team members will then need to agree that it's a match before a match by the FR system is acted on.
10. "FR is racially biased."	Where the FR system detects a match, two of our specially trained team members will still need to agree that it's a match before a match 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 store staff, who are required to keep information confidential, having access.

If you have any questions

For more information about our use of facial recognition visit:

<https://www.foodstuffs.co.nz/news-room/facial-recognition>