

Arc Map GIS tip: How to extract a portion of a (point or polygon) shapefile and create a NEW Shapefile:

For example, extracting the Continental USA states/counties from the 'USCounties' 50 state polygon shapefile:

- 1) Start with an Arc Map GIS map document with a single layer: the '50 US states' polygon shapefile.  
(Click here to download: <http://www.nceas.ucsb.edu/scicomp/Dloads/GISDatasets/USABaseCountyPolyShapeFiles.zip>)
- 2) Activate the Select Features mouse cursor tool (on Tools toolbar, fifth from right, arrow and square)
- 3) Use the cursor to draw a 'stretch box' around the features of interest.
- 4) At lower left of screen, select the 'Selection' tab of the Table of Contents window. Right-click on the 'selected feature' TOC entry (boldface), and select 'Create Layer from Selected Features'.
- 5) At lower left of screen, select the 'Display' tab of the Table of Contents window. Within the TOC, De-select (remove the check mark) all except the (new) selected layer.
- 6) Create new shapefile: From ArcToolbox, select Conversion Tools / To Shapefile / Feature Class to Shapefile. Within the 'Input Features' dropdown box, pick the selected layer that you created in 4). Specify an output folder, then click OK button to create the shapefile.
- 7) To verify, remove the selected layer (Step 4) from the TOC. Right-click on the Layers tree root, then select 'Add Data', then select the shapefile that you created in 6). The shapefile will re-appear.
- 8) To rename the shapefile, right-click on the TOC entry, then select Properties, then type a new name into the Layer Name: text box, then click the Apply button.