

“Runoff” is a word used to describe rain water or snowmelt that is not absorbed into the ground. In cities like Moline, rain falls on many buildings, streets and parking lots where water cannot reach the ground to soak in. Since the rainwater cannot reach the ground, it is collected in gutters and storm drains to be released in nearby ravines and creeks. “Runoff” gets its name from the movement of rainwater to the nearest draining point. In Moline, a network of underground pipes, roadside ditches and ravines carries this runoff water to the Mississippi and Rock Rivers, depending on where the rain falls.

This system of underground pipes works very well to help keep streets clear for driving and to help homes and businesses avoid flooding. Problems can occur in the pipes when runoff water picks up other materials on its way to a drain. Leaves, trash and chemicals can be carried by the fast moving runoff into storm sewer pipes. Sometimes, the junk that makes it into the storm sewer blocks up the pipes but more often, the trash and yard waste goes straight into the Mississippi and Rock Rivers, causing water pollution and damaging animal habitat. That is why we say “Only Rain Down the Drain!”

